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Forrest McDonald on Ben Franklin's Revenge

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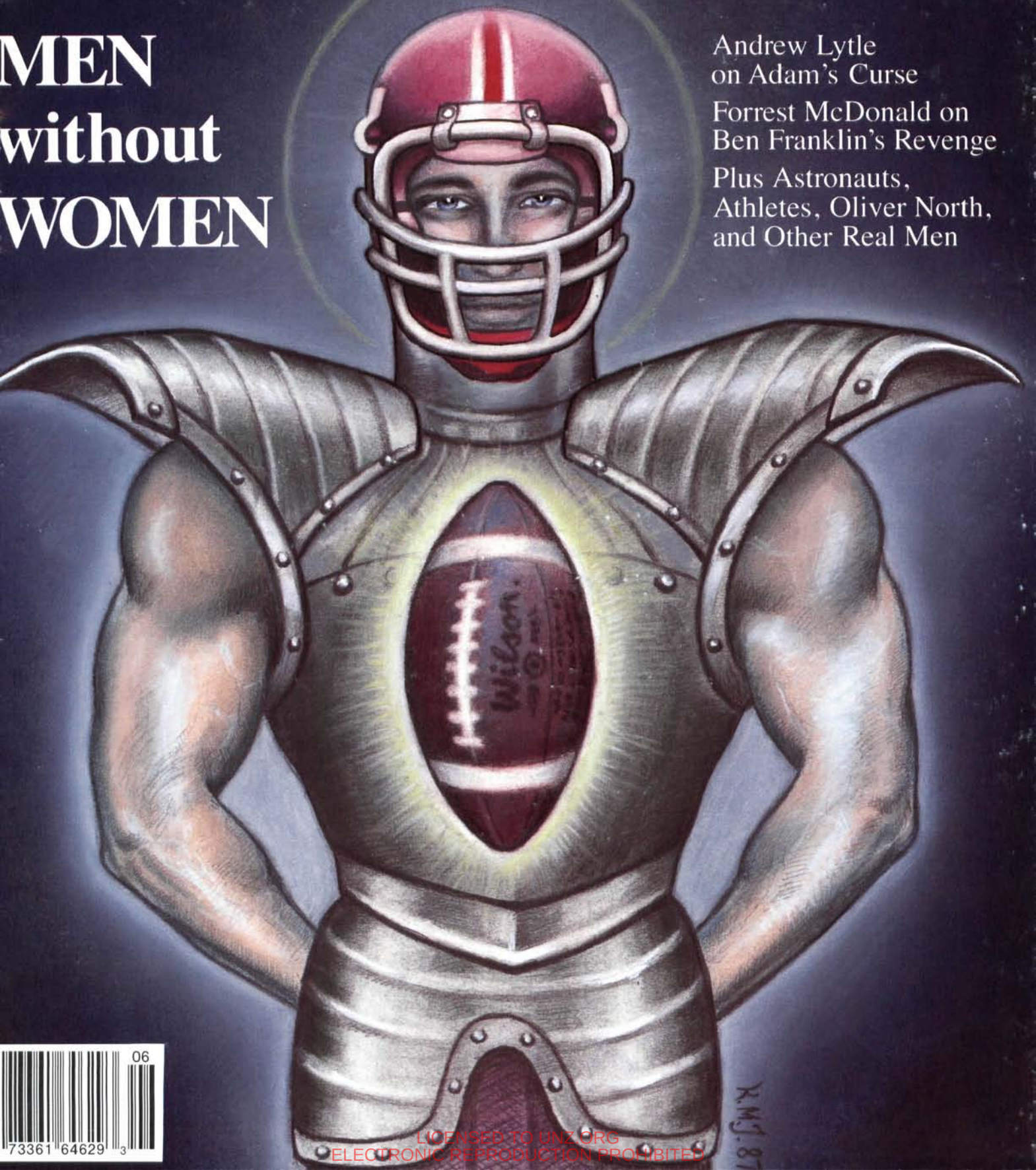

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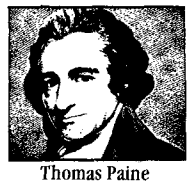
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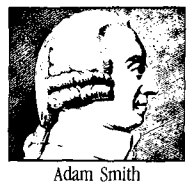
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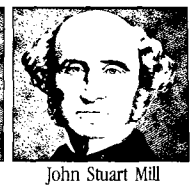
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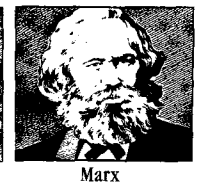
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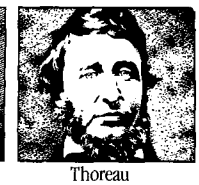
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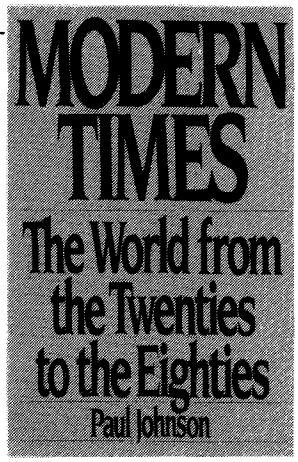

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"Yet _____ was not a statist. He said he was against any attempt 'to smuggle fascism into America through the back door'. On many issues he was a liberal....He did not make anti-Semitic jokes, like Woodrow Wilson and his wife or Franklin Roosevelt. To a very wide spectrum of educated American opinion, he was the leading American public man..." (Page 243)

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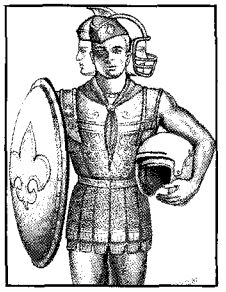

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On the Cover

Illustration on the cover and throughout the text by Krystyna Jachniewicz

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Death and taxes are only a little more predictable than the art of Andy Warhol. Just one month after Warhol's death in Manhattan at age 58 from a heart attack the morning of February 22, the day after otherwise successful gall bladder surgery, the artist was back in the news. Unlike the obits, the news wasn't on the front page; like the obits, the artist was connected with celebrities. Warhol was listed in an indictment from a Federal grand jury in an alleged tax-fraud scheme by which investors were able to make false tax deductions. Warhol wrote off $599,819, which is more than Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Poitier ($500,757) and Lorne Greene and wife ($333,838), but less than Michael Landon ($1 million) and the Norman Lears ($1.5 million). "Can't I deduct liquor if I have to get high to talk and talking's my business?"—*The Philosophy of Andy Warhol: From A to B and Back Again.*

Andy Warhol made his mark in the late 50's as a commercial artist—Tiffany's . . . Bonwitt Teller's . . . *Vogue* . . . *Glamour.* He was discovered by Ivan Karp at the start of the 60's. Karp told CBC Radio the day after Warhol's death that the artist had peaked before the 60's were over, a statement which leads only to questions about what the last 20 years have meant for Warhol's career. And then the details of his will become known: $15 million in personal property, films, *Interview* (founded, according to Gerald Malanga, so Warhol could get free film festival tickets), real estate, etc. His death, naturally, has caused the value of his work to rise.

Pop Art in America—initially known as Neo-Dada, Commonism, OK Art, and Common Image Art—was, in large part, a reaction to Abstract Expressionism. While the Abstract Expressionists created highly subjective works informed by a private "philosophy," the Pop Artists seized upon everyday images, from comic strip characters to the now-famous Campbell's soup can (Campbell Soup Company donated $2,000 in Warhol's memory to the New York Academy of Art, a small token when you consider that reprints of his renderings of the cans would really take a bite out of the company's media budget). Many of the Pop Artists, such as Roy Lichtenstein and James Rosenquist, like Warhol, had commercial art backgrounds. Robert Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns, the two most influential American precursors to Pop, did store window displays to make ends meet; now they are among the most wealthy living artists. But unlike Warhol, these artists went beyond the for-hire stage in attempting what we ordinarily call art.

Warhol wrote in his autobiographical "philosophy":

> I loved working when I worked at commercial art and they told you what to do and how to do it and all you had to do was correct it and they'd say yes or no. The hard thing is when you have to dream up tasteless things to do on your own.

Actually, Warhol never really had to decide on subjects for his painting or for the silkscreens which were executed by employees of The Factory. Early work—cows, crashes, flowers—resulted from recommendations by Karp, then-assistant at the Metropolitan Museum of Art Henry Geldzahler, and "superstar" Ultra Violet. The celebrities Warhol painted, photographed, and was "seen with" were thrust upon him by the fact of their success. Marilyn, Liz, Jackie . . . then on to Liza, Mick Jagger, Jane Fonda, and the rest: all stars. He didn't have to think. The later phase of Warhol's career, when he was busy knocking around with his subjects, is promotion at its best. The artist and celebrities fed on one another: to be big was to be a subject for Warhol; to be a subject for Warhol was to be big. Magritte could have made something of this: art. Warhol made money.

Warhol's name is sometimes associated with Picasso's, but that is a mistake. Warhol and Salvador Dali are the two artists who will leave the most similar marks on the 20th century. ("My best days are those on which on awakening I earn $10,000 before breakfast by engraving a plate for my own enjoyment, and which end with a $50,000 check that I pocket without a murmur after a fine gourmet supper" —Dali in *The Unspeakable Confessions of Salvador Dali.*) Dali, best known as a Surrealist, boasted of his own craftsmanship, his mastery of academic technique. Yet one premise of Surrealism is that the artist delves deep into the psyche, but no matter how many watches melt, no matter how peculiarly littered the landscapes, Dali's works are fundamentally superficial. To be sure, a fundamental ability, as there is in the work of Warhol. But in both cases, there is nothing below the sheen.

What is missing from Warhol and Dali is the conviction that art exists to express something, that it is more than technique. When the profit motive —legitimate as it is in art—becomes the end, then commerce is substituted for creation. To his credit, Warhol was perfectly candid: "I started as a commercial artist, and I want to finish as a business artist." He did. And a Federal grand jury has put his life's work in the proper perspective.

—*Gary S. Vasilash*

Danny Escobedo—remember him, the convicted murderer turned loose by the U.S. Supreme Court (in 1964) on the grounds he hadn't talked to his lawyer? Well, in the 20-plus years since, Mr. Escobedo has racked up 12 felony convictions, including one for selling heroin and another for taking indecent liberties with children. Most

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recently, he has been convicted of attempted murder. However, a kindly Chicago judge has ordered the latest sentence to run concurrently with his term as a sex offender. Perhaps Judge James Bailey is constrained by some obscure Cook County statute to exercise such leniency. If not, some higher power should reduce Escobedo's sentence to a house arrest—preferably the house of Judge Bailey or one of the splendid jurists who set him free in 1964.

Judges are morally responsible for crimes committed by every felon they return to the streets. They should also be made legally responsible. When judges and parole boards have to serve out the sentences of the psychopathic objects of their charity, they may begin to think about the consequences of their decisions. If such a scheme is impractical, then ordinary citizens will feel a strong temptation to pass an informal sentence of outlawry on all the lenient judges in the United States who prostitute the majesty of the law and subjugate the courts to the child-molesters, rapists, and assassins who own the streets. Humanitarian judges who choose to imperil our lives should be compelled, one way or another, to enjoy the fruits of their labors.

Jihad in Illinois has been canceled, at least temporarily. One Muhammad Sadiq Abid has decided not to sue the Illinois town of Zion for including Christian symbols on its coat of arms. What a relief. Anyway, what is a Moslem doing in Zion (or Illinois for that matter), when he could be enjoying the fruits of Islamic civilization in, say, Iran or Kuwait?

The only thing we have to fear is fear itself is the credo of Minnesota Twins' internist Leonard Michienzi. In the case of Jim Eisenreich, who came down with the willies, Michienzi tried treating the center fielder with Xanax, a Vallium-type drug used for treatment of agoraphobia. But for some reason, Eisenreich refused to be drugged into competence. Instead, he insisted on taking medication for the Tourettes Syndrome, a physical ailment affecting nervous response.

Eisenreich preferred sickness to the jitters, even at the price of his subsequent transfer to the minor leagues. But Jeff Shear (in the March 8 *New York Times Magazine*) finds such athletic machismo puzzling. Players, he suggests, are placed under too much stress for their own good.

Shear's lament rides the crest of a wave of "Jocks Liberation." Sports —substitute warfare or chase (or vicarious ordeal for the fans)—*is* elitist, merciless, and hierarchical. Whether Shear ever had sand kicked in his face by the big boys or not, he knows injustice when he sees it and takes Jim Eisenreich as a paradigm—a player who couldn't bat, catch, or throw whenever he had an attack of nerves: "When players experience stress disorders, the problems are often overlooked. The players' union and the owners both take the same view: the capacity for enduring stress is intrinsic to the success in the game."

Before passing an ordinance against losing games, Shear should explore the possibility of using professional wrestling as a model for football, basketball, and baseball. After all, Hulk Hogan always wins and the Mad Russian always loses in a choreography worthy of Chinese opera. Baseball, though not as tantrum-laden as the tennis of Ilie Nastasie or John McEnroe, is unpredictable and hard upon players like Eisenreich, unable to withstand jeering, booing, catcalling Boston fans, 380 feet away from the home plate in Fenway Park.

Firmness of conviction has finally returned to Christian journalism. Readers who have been annoyed by the wavering of *Commonweal*, *Christianity & Crisis*, *Sojourners*, and *America* on fundamental questions of doctrine —the divinity of Christ, the Resurrection, eternal life, the transcendence of God—may rejoice at the new certainty which galvanizes the religious left on one particular topic: AIDS.

Despite their pusillanimity when discussing Scripture or the creeds, the pious left is dead sure that AIDS cannot be a judgment of God sent to punish the homosexuals, drug users, and fornicators who now constitute about 95 percent of the disease's victims. "AIDS," affirmed *America* in a 1986 editorial, "is not God's wrath poured out on homosexuals." In the same spirit, *Christianity & Crisis* staunchly endorsed Episcopal "Bishop" Paul Moore's declaration that "AIDS is not God's punishment!" *Sojourners* chimed in with an attack on "the preachers of the religious Right . . . claiming that AIDS is God's punishment for sexual immorality," while *Commonweal* indicted those Christians who respond to AIDS with "an antiquated moral theology which [is] contributing to the atmosphere of homophobia."

In contrast, the evangelical *Christianity Today* recently confessed an attitude of "benign agnosticism" in assessing the belief that AIDS is a judgment sent from Heaven: "God *might* be judging sexual sin with AIDS," suggested a cautious editorial. That is probably as far as any decent man would be willing to go. No sane person can declare positively what is or is not the Creator's intention in any given case. Still, the Scriptures are explicit in condemning homosexuality, and it takes a chaired professor in theology to get around St. Paul. Without wishing anyone anything ill, even an atheist would find it a pleasant surprise to hear some religious publicist refresh our memories on the wages of sin. They don't call it *sodomy* for nothing.

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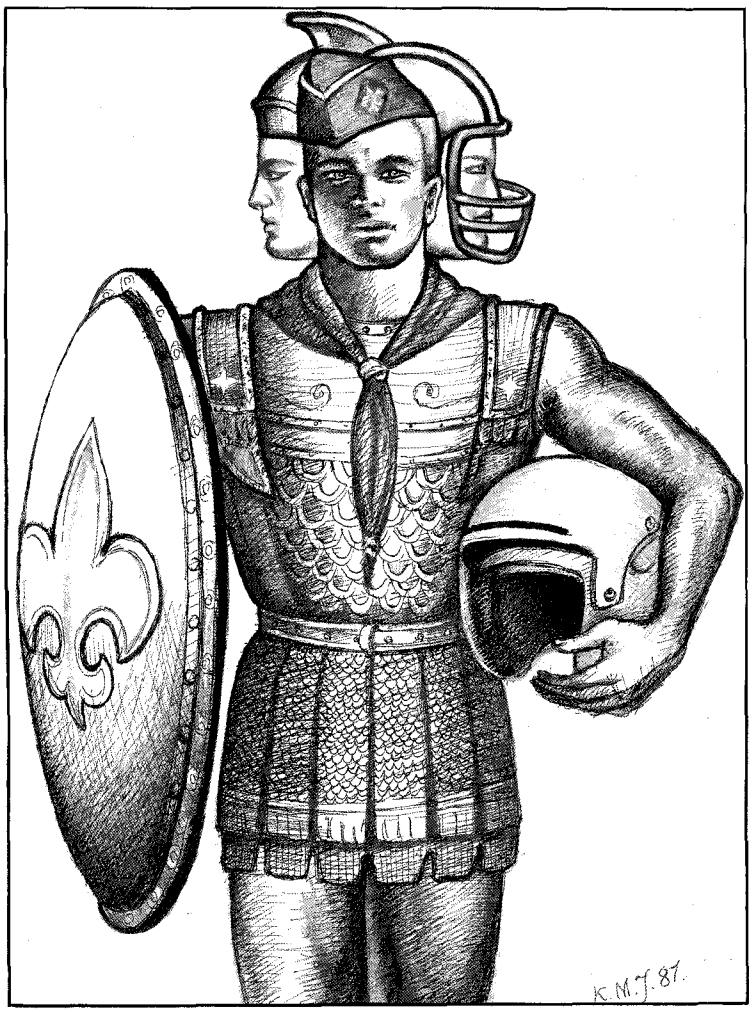
ARMS AND THE MAN *by Thomas Fleming*

I must have been 11 or 12 years old before my father put a gun into my hands and told me to shoot. By then, I had been out hunting with him several times a year but I had not ceased marveling at the efficiency and grace with which he handled a shotgun or a rifle. Once, I remember, we had just stepped into the woods a few yards when he motioned me to stop. I saw nothing but watched as he took two shells in the fingers of his left hand and pumped one into his Winchester .12 gauge. He hit the first grouse as it burst into the air, and by the time the second had gone a few feet higher, he had ejected, reloaded, and brought it down.

We were less than a mile from that spot, when he put the same shotgun in my hands and told me to shoot at a stump.



I was nervous and asked him why he was standing so far behind me—it seemed like eight feet. "Don't worry," he said, "just shoot." I squeezed the trigger and the whole universe blanked out. I woke to find my father catching me almost in midair.

I learned several things from that experience: for example, why skinny little boys don't hunt with .12 gauge shotguns, why "kick" is a more graphic term than "recoil" for what a gun does to your shoulder, and why a lifetime of shooting had dulled the hearing in one of my father's ears. I also learned to take guns very seriously, indeed. My father refused to let me have an air rifle, because he thought it encouraged a careless attitude toward firearms, and his favorite form of instruction was encouraging his children to learn from their mistakes. I learned all I need to know about cigarettes, when he found me imitating Bogart. "Don't worry," he reassured me, "if you want to smoke, go ahead." He lit the cigarette and urged me to take a deep drag. Finally that experience with the shotgun taught me, perhaps not for the first time, that fathers positively enjoy seeing their sons taken down a peg. That enjoyment, in my father's case, was bound to be replaced by the realization that his son would never come close to being the shot he was.

In fact, the boy grew up to be a mediocre marksman and a less than mediocre hunter. While in my imagination I hunted and fished with Hemingway's Nick Adams, the truth was that in performance I more resembled Faulkner's Boone Hoggenbeck. Even so, I still enjoy a walk in the woods better if I have a gun in my hands and once went through the necessary training to be licensed as a hunting safety instructor. As Thoreau suggests somewhere, a gun gives you something to do, a purpose that quickens the senses. A camera might do as well for some people but not for me. If I wanted to make pictures, I should have learned to draw. Besides, the only machines that really satisfy the inner man are those which work the soil or wreak destruction. If automobiles weren't dangerous, no man would buy a Lamborghini.

Fast cars, loud guns, and big mouths—they are all part of the painful process by which boys are sometimes transformed into men. I say *sometimes*, because the process is not automatic, and it is one that requires more than time. There is hardly a human society that does not recognize the difficulties of adolescence by providing for elaborate rites of passage. Plains Indians would fast and mortify their flesh in hopes of receiving a dream message or a spirit friend, and nearly everywhere there are special classes, items of dress, and initiation ceremonies by which troubled youth is

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gradually absorbed into the manhood of the tribe. The American system of schools, styles (punk or prep), and graduations may be the least effective that could have been devised. Where are the wise older men who give instructions into our tribal lore (college professors?), the grueling ordeals that give proof of manhood (SAT's? GRE's?)?

It is small wonder that at most high schools and colleges the most respected men on campus are the coaches. "Bear" Bryant and the late Woody Hayes were forces more than human, and the mild-mannered Dean Smith (North Carolina's basketball coach) was—and, I believe, is—revered as the fount of all virtues. Critics of professionalized college sports generally miss the point when they complain about the unwholesome influence of big-time football and basketball on campus. It is precisely in sports that boys might learn the ancient tribal secrets of America: that winning is everything, that the rewards for success in any endeavor go only to some combination of natural talent and hard work that is denied most people.

What, on the other hand, do aspiring men learn in nonathletic subjects? It is hard to say, exactly. They do not learn the history, foreign languages, and literatures that might initiate them into an entire civilization. Some are clever enough to regard the whole affair as a sham and learn all too early that fawning upon professors is a surer route to success than studying books. The most successful cynics quickly become class president and, after graduation, learn to play the same games in a broker's office or as lawyers with political ambitions. This system of institutionalized toadying, the art of mediocrity we call *higher* education, goes a long way toward explaining the power exercised by young foxes and weasels in every profession in which there is money or power to gain.

Things do not, generally, turn out so well for the young lions who try to become men the old-fashioned way. A few of them draw large salaries in professional sports, most do not; but even those who do have rarely taken the trouble to develop much more than physical skills. Len Bias, before taking his fatal overdose of an illegal drug, was described as a "student" at the University of Maryland, despite the fact that he had not completed even a phys ed or ed psych course in the previous two semesters.

How much are college coaches to blame for the poor performance and dismal life-histories of college athletes? In the case of Mr. Bias, Coach Drizell has a reputation for subordinating everything to one object only: a winning season. But even the most ruthless coaches function only as camp guards in a much larger system. University officials, prominent alumni, and state legislators are the parties to be held responsible when the time comes for a sort of Nuremberg Trial.

Here, then, is the paradox. High school and college sports (and the increasingly effeminate armed forces) provide the only initiation rituals for American boys, some of whom have lived in sterile suburbs under institutional circumstances (school, day care, YMCA classes) all their life; and yet, those who devote themselves to sports typically emerge, by the age of 21, as both ignorant and unprincipled. (While many recent MBA's are equally ignorant and even less-principled—that goes without saying—they succeed in the only way in which we measure success.)

Some boys do turn out better—we have seen them: healthy, intelligent, with some of the intellectual, moral, and physical tastes that used to characterize the gentleman. There are still creditable military officers to remind us of a lost era of American soldiers. In any era of human history, real men of any kind are a minority, but if the minority is large enough, as it was at Sparta, at Rome, or in the British Empire, then an entire society is pulled, perhaps unwillingly, in the right direction.

There is a good deal of truth in Gaetano Mosca's argument that a civilization is characterized by its elite class. If King Leonidas can be taken to represent Sparta, Cato Rome, and the Duke of Wellington the British Empire, then the United States is in a terrible state. The most representative figures these days are schemers and connivers—"prevaricators and prognosticators," as Captain Boyle would call them. Any list would have to include, in politics, such worthies as Howard Baker and Jim Wright. Business might be represented by Lee Iaccoca, famous for his ability to hoodwink politicians into advancing him credit, or—better yet—Ivan Boesky (Chrysler, after all, still makes products, while Boesky dealt only in deals). In "the arts" we are treated to the spectacle of self-advertisers like Norman Mailer, the late Andy Warhol, and Leonard Bernstein.

But why go on? We live in an age that has lost its sense of shame. A good and wise President is not embarrassed to be called "the great communicator"—as if he were an advertising genius—and his former associates will do anything to trade on their familiarity with the President. Mr. Stockman tells tales out of school, and Mr. Deever does not even try to pretend that his influence-peddling was not immoral: Was it illegal, will he have to pay?—that is the only question.

The shamelessness and effeminacy of public men was the most salient quality of the latest Iranian fiasco. Out of weakness, the administration went back on its sworn word not to deal with terrorists—a terrible mistake. But what is the response? The press, aided by the Democratic majority, seize the opportunity to emasculate a Presidency in its last two years. The security and welfare of the United States —so badly damaged by the Watergate affair—are once again threatened and by the same vermin prating of the public's right to know. Even if Mr. Gorbachev seized West Germany, Sam Donaldson would not allow it to interfere with his dreams of book contracts, Pulitzer Prizes, and movie rights. The President's men were, if anything, even worse. Secretary Shultz tried to stick in his thumb and pull out a bigger plum in the form of increased control over foreign policy. What a good boy he was to oppose covert action! Robert McFarlane—a key player in the whole scandal—displayed his mettle by allegedly attempting suicide. On the most charitable interpretation, McFarlane bungled the job as badly as he bungled the arms deal. Now hostile correspondents like Daniel Schorr now treat him with benign contempt. In response to questions about his future plans, McFarlane confesses, "I love government." As if we hadn't guessed.

In all this disgraceful episode, one man did his duty and has so far attempted neither to shift the blame nor turn the affair to his own profit. That man is Oliver North. If we can believe administration sources, this young Marine colonel

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was virtually running American foreign policy—drawing up vast plans, carrying out illegal deals, all without the knowledge or complicity of senior officials. If North is really guilty of all this, the entire administration should resign and, preferably, go into exile. It is as if a commander should blame a defeat upon an adjutant. No President is perfect, and of all the mistakes Mr. Reagan has made in this business, the worst may have been to change his mind about North. If history has any lessons, we can expect Col. North to play the part once assigned to G. Gordon Liddy, one of the few men to come out of Watergate with his honor unsmirched. If North is the man he seems to be, then he will probably do time. At this rate, America will come to resemble the Soviet Union, where the best men end up in jail.

The moral cowardice, the weakness of the American elite class, is a problem that transcends distinctions of liberal and conservative. There have been principled leftists with a sense of honor, and the conservative movement has a full measure of weasels and foxes at every level. The degeneracy of upper classes is not, of course, a new theme, but in former times the American people constituted an apparently inexhaustible repository of virtue and character from which new leadership classes could be drawn. What Clyde Wilson likes to call the yeomanry and what William Jennings Bryan referred to as "plain people" were the farmers and small-town tradesmen who were suckled on adversity. The men conducted business on a handshake, while the women zealously enforced the moral and social code by means of the most powerful weapons available to the human race: gossip and shunning. As my father used to drum into my head, "If a man is only as good as his word, what is left of a man when he breaks his word?"

The sad truth is that the plain people no longer constitute the American majority. The family farm is virtually extinct, and increasing numbers of small-town merchants begin to resemble their big-city counterparts. Morally, at least, Main Street is turning into an extension of Wall Street. Even if we set aside the larger moral and cultural questions, the situation is a calamity for a United States that is called upon to exercise a responsible role as an imperial nation. Who have been the heroes of every war since the Revolution? The stockbrokers? People in "service industries"? Alvin York and Audie Murphy—both rural Southerners—come to mind whenever I see a list of casualties from Vietnam (or Lebanon). Why are small, rural states so disproportionately represented? We know the answer. Young men from Arkansas and South Dakota are still willing to defend their country. City boys know better.

Rural Americans may be as clownish and savage as they are portrayed in films (although I doubt it), but as a class they have been vital to the national interest. There is no one at hand to replace them. When Rome succeeded in civilizing all the barbarians within the empire, she gradually came to rely on German mercenaries. When the Goths seized control of the Western Empire, the Romans realized their mistake. Fortunately or not, we have no hardy barbarians to recruit on the other side of either of our borders. (Canadians are softer than we are, and the Mexicans have not had to fight a foreign enemy since we mopped up their professional army in the Mexican War.)

In one sense, the Romans were in a better situation, because their upper class maintained, for some time, an attachment to military sports and a commitment to public service. The Emperor Marcus had been raised in the lap of luxury, and yet he spent his life in camp. When the heart is gone, there is still some hope for a nation whose head is sound. But that is precisely why we are doomed: We are filling our service academies with women, and the one official who has spoken out—James Webb—is running into stiff opposition on his nomination as Secretary of the Navy; the Marine Corps is being transformed into a set of uniformed Alan Aldas who are upset with Clint Eastwood for *Heartbreak Ridge*. In fact, we don't have anything resembling an elite class, military or otherwise. All we have are children of the rich and famous.

If I were writing a Frank Capra scenario, I should pin all my hopes on the Boy Scouts. Imagine boys from all over—cities, suburbs, farms, and small towns—learning woodcraft and discipline from Mr. "Jeff" Smith. Life at home might be soft, but once a week and every summer American boys live like little Spartans who forage off the land or go hungry, who learn to face danger without flinching, who live according to the simple code of the Boy Scout Oath:

> On my honor I will do my best:
> to do my duty to God and my country,
> and to obey the Scout law;
>
> To help other people at all times;
>
> To keep myself physically strong, mentally
> awake, and morally straight.

The 80's are not the 30's (which were bad enough), and we would be hard pressed to find a Mr. Smith to send to Washington. And if we did, he would have a hard time conveying a sense of shame to the men who run the show. And the Boy Scouts? After flirting with social activism in the 60's and 70's, they are settling back down to the scouting I remember from the 50's: mostly sissies who learned to make things out of raffia and earned merit badges for helping Mom out in the kitchen. Here and there one runs into good troops, and they do less harm than most organizations, but I wish they'd go back to woodcraft. On my last camping trip as a Second Class Scout, we slept in beds in a heated cabin, cooked foil-wrapped shish kebabs the mothers had prepared in advance, and hot-wired the scoutmaster's car to go joyriding. I quit the Scouts, not long after.

I ran into our assistant scoutmaster two years later. I was in the woods with a friend who had a pump air rifle that stung like the devil when you got shot. The Scout—about 19 years old—and two friends had brought a .22 but started fooling around with our BB gun. "Run, you S.O.B." one of them shouted as he shot, repeatedly, his friend. Sick of the whole thing, the friend grabbed the .22 and proceeded to shoot between the legs of his tormentor. Bullets kicked chunks out of trees and ricocheted off the rocks and water of the stream he ran across. We grabbed the air rifle and took off. With any luck, the Scout and his friends grew up to be investment bankers, political activists, or Presidential advisors in charge of this nation's destiny.

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A MYTH IN A GARDEN *by Andrew Lytle*

The following is the text of Mr. Lytle's speech at the 1986 Ingersoll Prizes Awards Banquet:

Born the day after Christmas, 1902, like a wet firecracker, as my mother remarked, I entered a world that lived with and by other creatures. My grandchildren and their ilk are unaware that they are creatures. I am closer to the 12th century than to their world, for that world has money, not salvation, as its ultimate desire. College graduates study jobs to get, not occupations to risk.

As I grew up in Murfreesboro, the town easily joined the country. There were horses to hitch up, cows to milk (and that twice a day), often gardens to make. In town and country both, communities had the same kind of family life, with kin and connections, the connections by marriage, not blood. Because of this, people of the same station had the same social life and, frequently, the same marriages. Farming had not lost then its prestige as a way of life, and you could live well by it.

My mother was a town girl. My father lived 10 miles in the country, but he kept fast horses. He would dance all night and drive the 10 miles, throw a blanket over Lunette's back (she was a Hambletonian), and go straight to the fields. I spent my childhood mostly in town. Coming home at the end of the day, tired from play, I could smell roasting coffee beans down the long street to my grandmother Nelson's house, where we lived for a time. The odor sharpened a boy's appetite, but chiefly was reassuring. I breathed it as comfort without knowing why. I felt the invisible link between all the houses on the street, filled as they were by families I knew or knew about, who had children I played with, or special associations.

Mr. Dee Smith striding to the Square and Miss Luly, his wife, trotting behind like an appendage trying to catch up. He was a cousin of my grandmother's, whose dwelling meant love and discipline, food and sleep, where grown people always looked the same and never had to be measured for growth. Across the street lived Miss Katie Fowler, who sang in the Presbyterian choir. A suitor, Mr. Peter Binford, Sunday after Sunday sat enthralled, watching her bosom rise and fall in song. One memorable Sunday he saw the sack of love break about her heart, and the heart leapt two feet towards him. Her mother threatened to put him in the asylum, and he threatened to pick every pinfeather out of her old hide. He had a good cousin lawyer whose defense was: A man in love is naturally insane. The case was dismissed. Not long afterwards, Mr. Binford asked my father to go in partnership with him in selling frog legs. He said they were bringing a good price on the Chicago market. "How will we get them there?" my father asked. "Hop them," he replied.

Further down the street lived my other grandmother. They had thought it best to sell her farm, where she lived alone, and bring her to town. One night a storm had come up and she went into the garden to look after some small chickens. There was a loose paling in the garden fence through which she by habit went. The wind blew her lantern out, and all night long as the rain fell she wandered trying to find the loose board. As I went to school, I passed her house on the other side of the street. Bending under a load of books, I hurried along, but she would call across the

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street, a thing my other grandmother would never do, "Hold up your shoulders, grandson," and I would straighten up. This was in front of Mr. Rufus Hayne's house, who conjured some warts from my hand. He just took out his pocket knife and ran it over the warts, mumbling words I didn't catch. In a few days they were gone.

Half a block towards town lived Miss Carmine Collier. She was a miser, and she dressed well, in a mustard-colored coat suit, a big hat with a bird of paradise roosting on her head. I looked hard to see what a miser was. Any difference from other women was in the eyes. Round-like glass eyes, they were steady as a hawk's. She never married. One lover said, "Carmine, I'll put down two dollars where you put one, if you'll marry me." He said later a glassy film closed down her eyes, just like a chicken's. With that he gave up. I was playing on the hearth when Miss Carmine came to thank Mammy for the posey her mother held in the coffin. Mammy said, "Now Carmine, you can't live in that big house all by yourself. Buy you some hats, go to Florida in the winter and the springs, in the summer, and get you a man." "Miss Kate," she replied, "I've thought about it. But suppose I was lying in bed with that man, and he would want the window up and I would want it down. They will have their way, and I'd freeze to death." "Get cold in bed with a man?" Mammy said. "I had to take a fan to bed with Robert."

Country boys were usually tougher than town boys, not in meanness, necessarily, but just better-natured. A cousin once told me about his little brother Micajah. He said he was hard as a pine knot and tough as a horse mule colt. He didn't waste no time. He came into the world a-bouncing, hollowed once, and then made for the teatty nighest him. Looked like Ma never could wean him. She complained, "I can't git my washen and ironing done. Ever whar I go it's teatty this, and teatty that. A body can git too much teatty. A woman needs to dry up like any creature. He pulls so hard, and now he's got teeth, I declare . . . " Aunt Marthy said to her, "I'll tell you what to do, Sister. Look at Othel. I weaned him in the dark of the moon, and look what a man he made." "Dark or light, it don't make no difference to Micajah." "Do this then. Go to the storehouse and git you some quinine. You've got cayenne pepper and lard. Mix them ingredients good, grease yourself good, and when he comes in, offer it to him." She done it. She and pappy were settin' on either side of the farplace when in he bounced. Right off, "Mammy lemme have it." "Well, here tiz, son, come git it." He squared himself, grabbed it like a snapping turtle, and jumped back like a snake had bit him. "Pappy," he called, "Gimme a chaw of tobacco. Mammy's been eating bitter weed."

As a child, I don't remember any fears or real distress. I'm sure there were the usual threats to innocence, but there were plenty of warnings from that back room where all authority was. There were Gypsies of course. They were given to stealing away boys from their families. It was a dreadful thought. Once a year they came from all over the country to bury their dead in Nashville, at which time a shiver would run through the galloping herd of boys. Any dark-featured stranger would get covert glances. L.W. Coleman, my playmate, and I were on the Square as a contingent of Gypsies passed in their wagons. L.W. had stolen a quarter out of his mother's sewing-machine drawer, and we were loaded with all-day suckers and chewing Long John Wax dusted with powdered sugar, molasses popcorn, and holding each a sack of goober peas. Fearing to take it home—and we were instinctively headed that way, for Gypsies had mysterious ways of conjuring children to them—he gave me what was left. I knew I had to hide it, or there would be questions. I went to Daisy, our cook, and she obliged. She and I already had a criminal record. I took one of my grandfather's cigars, and she and I smoked it. I learned quickly that crime doesn't pay, while Daisy went off with the cigar.

In my childhood, most human creatures, as they set forth to work or play, dance or love, touched hallowed ground, a pond, an everlasting spring, an old elm, a farm that generations had known and lived on and by. Children know these special sympathies for places, where they can hide and pretend. There can be no greater delight in privacy than the tunnel made in bales of hay, leading to a fragrant hollowed-out and usually itching place in a barn loft, which most little girls instinctively suspected. This pretending is child's best play, that ineluctable moment, just east of Eden, when eyes are still shining from the afterglow of the Garden, just before sight dims in the light of the world, and pretending trembles upon quickening knowledge. And there was the common knowledge of the long history all creatures shared. The rat, the skunk, the fox that set out on the chilly night had most of the instincts, needs, and faculties humans shared. At Cornsilk I once set two Domineka hens. They hatched about the same time. One was a poor mother and began losing her hatch. The other hen scratched, chuck chucked, and the little chicks ran to her. I put the Lib hen in the stockpot (she wasn't fit to eat) and gave her chicks to the good mother. She now had about 25 to feed and raise and tell what that shadow from the sky meant and what to do. One morning as I went to let her out of the pen, I saw the oddest-looking creature. She did not have a feather down her front, but she had all her chicks under and around her. During the night she had fought off a mink. That was over 50 years ago. I've got close kin I rarely think of, but when I think of all those batteries of Leghorns dropping their eggs into a slot like squatting robots, mules and horses disappearing as work stock, and cows milked by metal hands, I wonder what we have done.

We have been told that we were made in the image of God. That no doubt is true, but so are all creatures, a hummingbird, a jackass. We are all artifacts together. We were made, not begotten. It is true, Adam was given the power to rule over those he had named. He named Eve, too, but perhaps he chose not to exercise the power in this instance. At any rate, it was a delegated power.

We might do well in our present plight to look again at Eden, that myth in a garden. In the beginning of things, the creation of the cosmos, why did the Creator make that little garden, some say of Innocence? First, the invisible power we refer to as God, for his ineffable reason, assumed a limitation. He became a creator, that is, the First Artist. The next thing, he looked about him and saw that what he had made was good. This is the surprise all artists know, for in the heat and stress of the work, the maker cannot know for sure just how the artifact will come out. In Louis

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Ginsberg's *Legends of the Jews*, he states that "God made several worlds before ours, but he destroyed them all, because he was pleased with none until he created ours."

At this point there must be some query into the forbidden mystery of the Creator's mind. Simply what limits had the All-powerful One put upon Himself when He created Himself Creator? Without pause he split the void with his lightning stroke. After the explosion he must have seen that he had not done away with the dark. He had merely scattered it. And furthermore this startling discovery: He who had only known Eternity found Himself in Time. The moment there are opposites, there is motion; there is Time. Perhaps at this moment we can conjecture that he made the Garden of Innocence, outside Time, into which he could withdraw as landlord and, without being rushed, decide what to do next.

Obviously he had intended to restore a small fragment of Eternity in this place. He entered the garden royally, only to discover he was no longer a free agent. He had become an actor; a creator, but now a prejudiced creator. He found it pleasant to walk there in the cool of the day. He was perfectly satisfied at first with the flora and fauna. All the artifacts in the garden had one thing in common. Each was perfect in its seasonal way. But since there was no Time, there could be no aging or seasonal change. Each plant stood in the perfection of its moment of creation, but did not grow. And so it was with the fauna. Indeed there could be no action. Although they seemed to move, their motions were the motions of angels, visible but without body.

When the Creator-now-turned-landlord saw that his artifacts were good, the more he looked the more he felt the power of possession. Herein lies the drama of the Garden. According to the Haggadah, the legendary part of the Talmud, the landlord saw that Adam, unlike the other creatures, was alone like Himself. He had not yet begun to say the Lord thy God is a jealous god, but lest the other creatures should take Adam for a god, too, he told him to pick a wife. Adam by nature was biddable, but he could find no female he could claim kin with. Most were four-legged, or they had tails. Some crawled, some flew out of range. Not for an instant did he consider the fish, but he looked long and hard at the sheep.

Now the plot thickens. It concerns Adam's first wife, Lilith. It is not said where she came from, but she brought one thing the garden did not have. She was full of flesh. The dictionary of angels counts her as one of the four guardian angels of whorehouses. She ate children. She had other uncomplimentary habits. But she was no threat. She took one look at the creature who seemed painted air and fled. Three angels pursued and caught her, but they could not drag her back to the garden. The landlord was relieved. He wondered why he had not seen the solution before. There was Adam, a hermaphrodite, a whole creature, male and female in one form—as Plato would later say, looking like two people embracing. The solution was simple. He had done it once on a larger scale. He would do it again.

He put Adam to sleep, and we know the rest. Adam called her Eve. She was two-legged and a great hand at giving advice. The landlord was not entirely pleased. She almost looked as if she was made of matter. She had the air of disobedience, and that was a certain threat to power. In His angelic garden, hidden at its very center, stood two trees of a greater density, the same kind of density the female Eve had. They had appeared, unordered, in his emanations. When power is uncertain, it threatens. He called the man and woman to him but addressed Adam as the head of the house. "At the center of the garden is a tree. It grows a fruit only the gods can digest: good and evil. If you eat of it, you will surely die."

Not yet brought to full life, to die meant nothing to Adam. It was like telling a child, "Don't go near the fire, you will burn." All the while Eve was listening with her eyes demurely to the ground. At first she thought it a beautiful tree trunk—maybe the very tree Adam was told not to touch. But nobody told *her* not to touch it.

Its golden scales shimmered in a round undulation as it grew out of itself, coiling upwards. Her eyes were dazzled, and there leaning towards her was a head with lapis lazuli eyes. They winked. How strange, to wink without a lid. She waited enraptured, bewildered before the tree's luscious fruit, the mandala swollen into a sphere, dirt come to its miracle. At the very topmost bough, now russet, now golden, hung the most tempting object of all. Saliva moistened her mouth. She reached to touch it but met instead the flickering tongue, gliding towards the shell-like ear, saying softly, "sicut eritis dei" ("you will be as the gods"). She bit: Her five senses throbbed with appetite. Her eyes opened, and there was the world, and she and Adam were in it. She offered him the fruit. He bit and they rushed together. And he bit again.

Not disobedience, then, but the sorrows of knowledge, of good and evil whose end is death, that is the lesson the myth of the garden has for mankind. The loss of innocence is no fall. You cannot fall from innocence. You quicken. You enter the motion of life. In spite of himself, the landlord and his creatures, now carnal, must reckon with Time. Adam and Eve with their increase will now be wayfarers in the world. The Creator either had to withdraw into his invisible omniscience or follow his creatures into their predicament. This he did, but no longer a landlord. No more walks in the cool of the day. No conversations. A thunderer now from high places. A patriarch bereft of all but power. An archangel whirling a left-handed swastika before the garden gate, humming forbidden, forbidden, a hollow hum, for there was no garden. Once lost, innocence is gone forever. It was hard for the landlord to give up his garden, his artifacts, and there was Cain cultivating the wilderness, insolently using Time and its seasons to imitate His own creations. Sweating but bringing forth fruit from the ground. To be blessed. Not to praise his creator, but his produce.

So it seems, and so it seems that the power of the Creator as artist was displaced in the divine omniscience by the power of possession. One of the faculties of creation puts the essence of the artist into his artifact. It was out of this that Cain, the inheritor, acted, that is imitated. Man cannot create what is already there. He can only imitate what his vision discovers and what by form he can render. All the artists in Time cannot exhaust one created artifact, for in it is the fullness of the divine intention. But the landlord of the garden in his shift in roles mistook imitation for the thing itself. Now the god as patriarch was a jealous

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god. He saw imitation as an attempt to deny power, and so brought death and disease into the world.

The divine problem seems to be the stress between Eternity and Time. To summarize much, that the Creator's human artifacts become carnal gave Him a great vexation. So much so that he drowned nearly all of them, along with the innocent animals who had done nothing but be animals. When the land dried out, he made a covenant with mankind. As the sweet savor of Noah's sacrifices rose to the divine nostrils, He understood how frail He made the flesh. He foresaw the inescapable part appetite (and the most dangerous appetite of all, power) would play in his creature's long history; and his heart, if one can speak of the Creator's heart without blasphemy, softened. He put a colored bow into the clouds as a covenant between Him and man, promising never to curse the ground again. He came to understand better his role as Creator as He transferred into all creation not his appearance but the world's forms now made visible by the transaction. In the High Days of Christendom, all men as craftsmen accepted this. What they made they did to make a living, but they did it also to the greater glory of God.

But to quote Coomaraswami, no longer is every man a craftsman. Today the craftsman is a special kind of man. The power we suffer now is not God's wrath. It is man's pride. In deleting the "as" from the "be as," it is we who offer the affront, not Cain. What poor grammarians. Only one word. As. How could its deletion do such damage? Christianity supplanted by Progress, a religion without a god, carnal goods its prayer book, its hope of salvation the perfectability of man, all Puritan desires. There has been a fall of man, but it is the fall into history, man judging man. But man dies.

What we have lost by this is our sense of a common creaturehood with living beings, and that includes ourselves; and we have lost our tools. Nevertheless, there is still man's deep need to make things, in spite of technology's grim effort to deny him its practice. Few men now are craftsmen, that is, few men are now Christian. No longer artists, we serve the autonomous machine. For a long time the machine as tool aided the craftsman to make. A divine inheritance withers when the tool becomes the master and the Word is drowned in words. If we can hold in mind that the Word is the creative power of God, we will take to heart that it was made flesh in Christ. Only in this way will we become again good grammarians and restore the "as" to the admonition.

But to want to restore a lost faith in a secular society will not of itself do so. We've got to have some luck or by some miracle rescue language from the surfeit of half-truths which confuse its authority. Again it takes only one word to betray. We have witnessed temperance turn into prohibition, that blasphemous theft of God's own tool, the Word. And debase it. If language in all its proper usages is not restored, the confusion of tongues whose advance is rapid will grow more so. The care of words as it guards meaning can reopen our eyes, allow us to confess that we who have thought of ourselves as rich have only been profligate, and progress the progress of Hogarth's heir. Then instead of appetite, comfort, and safety as ends, we may know again faith, hope, and charity.

But not without the cardinal, the Roman, virtues: prudence, temperance, fortitude—these three defining Justice, as prudence disciplines the will, temperance the sensibility, and fortitude that moral courage which makes it possible. Else Justice will have no more meaning than a case won in court.

If a miracle could happen, every man as craftsman would know again he has only one contemplation, the mystery of God, made manifest in the natural order. Remember: Any divinity we have is imparted. It allows us by craft to make things, because we were made, not begotten. Both as artists and actors, human creatures may again try to turn the wilderness of Time into a habitable garden, as did Cain. And, this time, growing the foods of life and building creature shelters may not seem to the divine Essence a threat to a god's power.

WITH THE LAUREL: FOR ANDREW LYTLE *by M.E. Bradford*

What makes it so appropriate that Andrew Lytle should receive the Richard M. Weaver Award for Scholarly Letters is that Mr. Lytle is one of the gifted people who inspired Dick Weaver's career as what he called "an Agrarian in exile." Moreover, an essay on the reissue of *I'll Take My Stand* was among the last things which Weaver wrote before his untimely death in 1963. Throughout his public life Weaver honored the example of the Twelve Southerners who in 1930 set themselves in the way of Juggernaut when they issued their manifesto against culture "poured in from the top": against the indifference to human contingency which imagines that there is a promise of transcendent value in such presumption. Andrew Nelson Lytle is one of the three members of that original company still surviving. With long life the Good Lord has given him an opportunity to be persistent. For, an interval of 56 years has not persuaded him to retreat from his original opinion, has indeed only deepened his commitment to it, while the world wags its own way toward perdition.

Andrew Lytle has been farmer, actor, historian, editor, teacher, literary critic, cultural and social commentator, and novelist. But in the end all these enterprises have come

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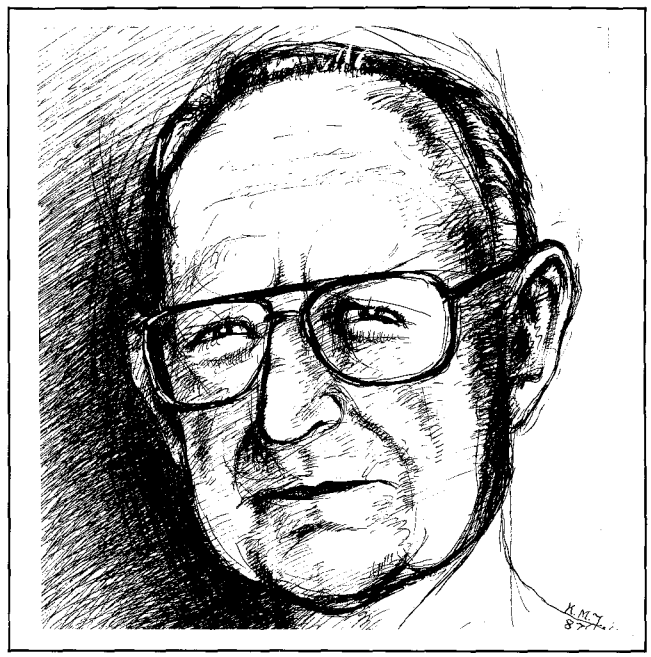
together in the larger role which he plays among us today. For Mr. Lytle has become (and was on his way to being since he first began to write) one of the memory keepers, a repository of the shape and feel of life in this country before it ceased to think of itself as part of the Christian West. Indeed, he remembers even more than he ever knew. For about the form and texture of a world he experienced as only a lingering shadow or "ghostly presence," Lytle learned (especially through stories) enough to imagine, to reconstruct, what he could not have seen. He came to this role naturally because he had, in a Southern context, known his own predecessors. Of them he wrote that "At a family gathering, when people were not working but celebrating, there would always be one voice more capable than another of dominating the conversation. It was a kind of bardic voice." Lytle has made fictional use of this gift and knows its value when he comes toward us directly. The by-gone commonwealth which he represents lives also in the hearts of the rest of us who continue by choice to be its citizens and is made available to the performance of our piety through the acts of the memory keeper, the agency of his narratives as they preserve and reaffirm a truth not easily rendered in discursive terms. In this connection I think immediately of Lytle's matchless biography of the Tennessee Achilles, General Nathan Bedford Forrest, and of his essay on the same mighty warrior, "The Hero and the Doctrinaires of Defeat"; of his recent *Reflections of a Ghost*, and the extraordinary family chronicle, A *Wake for the Living*. In these works we hear the accent of the *vates*, who utters for us the formula of our inheritance.

The thematic focus of much of Mr. Lytle's work has been upon the history of European man in this hemisphere, and especially upon his dream of a heaven on earth, an Eldorado, of the kind that has often inspired his adventures in "westering." It is a recognizable subdivision of the larger subject of modernity and its costs: the great matter of how we might escape contingency and the consequences of the Fall, of the idea of a "new man" who can, through will, ingenuity, or mere relocation build on this side of Jordan some continuing city. According to Oswald Spengler, all of these dreams of a terrestrial beatitude have their collective representation and proper symbol in the old magician, Dr. Faust. Mr. Lytle tends to agree with that part of Spengler's analysis of what has happened to Christendom since the Renaissance. And he includes the artist as among Faustian figures—that is, if he refuses to submit his imagination to his subject until "seized" by "the form, the artifice" hidden there. Yet as artist and thinker, maker and commentator, Lytle has always known better than to set store by disembodied truth. Therefore his focus has been upon specific versions of the alchemical prototype caught up in Faustian flight from human limitations and the responsibilities which go with them: in either individualism or collectivism, worship of self or of state—both rejections of the old view which maintains that each man has his place or gift of which he is steward because (or if) he loves.

Lytle's literary and cultural criticism, much of it gathered in *The Hero With the Private Parts*, is clearly the reverse side of what he has done as one of the masters of the craft of fiction. Of the former he writes that "reading is one way to learn to write." He has aspired to a total reading of those



fictions which most interest him, and in dealing with Ford, Crane, Tolstoy, Faulkner, Joyce, and (especially) Flaubert, he has achieved his goal. He has also written memorably about the creative process itself, of being "merely an instrument"; and about the "network of conventions inside of which men and women perform the perennial actions summarized in our inheritance of myth." Lytle has reminded us that Promethean man, on his way to Babylon, cannot be the artist because he understands the world as an object to be controlled. In contrast, mythopoeic man looks at it in wonder and, in reporting a reaction, leaves it to others to make propaganda and convert insight into marching orders. The best fiction, he persuades us, engenders in its audience something like that sense of wonder. In much of it the action rendered belongs to a specific context of culture and history—"manners and customs, codes, public and private disciplines"—and concerns of "people within the constraint of some inherited social agreement." Andrew Lytle does not write or praise a literature of Platonic abstractions, which is perhaps why we should value in particular Lytle the narrator, the raconteur, the teller of tales—the one who remembers that we live only in all of the particulars of our condition, not in some anterior general state, separate from its incarnate complexity.

The antitype of the memory keeper is the artist or intellectual as alienated man: the figure we know best in modern literature through James Joyce's Stephen Daedalus, the hero of his *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. Young Stephen, putting behind family, homeland, and church, prays to the Daedalus of myth, "Old Father, old artificer, stand me now and ever in good stead." But the memory keeper requires no such transport. He uses his gift piously, without converting his craft into a substitute religion. Out of a sacramental view of the creation and an honest realism about the creature, he makes his witness within an inherited culture, not an imaginary republic of letters, and if he does so well as Andrew Lytle, deserves the laurel which has been given with this award to him.

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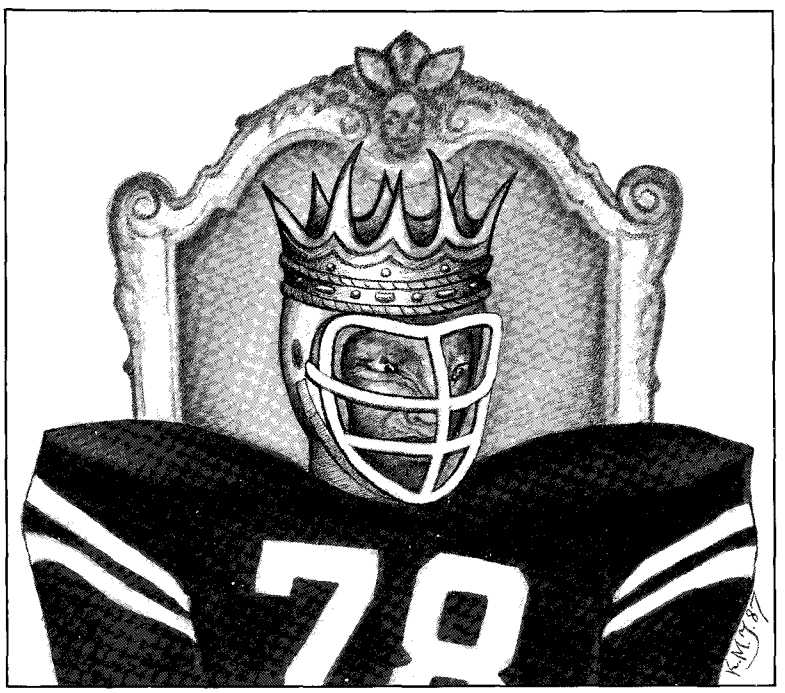
THE ORDER OF VIRTUE *by John P. Sisk*

For some time now, the literature of the sporting world has offered one of the most agreeable ways of experiencing revisions of public reality. Perhaps this is why it is hard to read Howard Cosell's best-seller *I Never Played the Game* without a sense of déjà vu. "In the beginning," he writes, "I had romantic ideas about sports," but 15 years as a television announcer had forced "vast changes in my thinking." He wants to dispel those misconceptions, particularly since the young of the 60's and 70's, having grown up in a terrible time, now want truth, not fiction. As he put it in his earlier *Like It Is*, "the religious acceptance of the doctrine of purity which has previously enshrouded the world of sport" is simply too much for any thinking person. The time needs an "anti-hero like Mohammed Ali."

It may not be clear to all Cosell readers why he calls Ali an antihero, since Ali in his salad days had so much in common with an old-fashioned epic hero like Beowulf, who managed to confound the odds-makers of his day by overcoming the reigning monster, Grendel, just as decisively as Ali overcame Sonny Liston. Ali was even a boaster in the tradition of ancient heroes—something never permitted the modern antihero, who has adopted desecrating obscenity in the place of boasting as a sign of antiheroic authenticity. Perhaps it was Ali's lack of respect for the boxing establishment, that once tried to deny him his rightful honors, that makes him for Cosell the same scourge of middle-class hypocrisy that the late Lenny Bruce was for others.

But Ali is incidental to larger issues here. In his way, Cosell is writing postromantic literature and is himself the antihero of a book in which he is no more bothered by false modesty than Ali. As a trustworthy revisionist, he is in the tradition of the modernists and postmodernists, with connecting lines to Flaubert at one end and Thomas Pynchon at the other. In this tradition, the recurring conflict is between romantic and realistic (sometimes nihilistic) views of reality with the latter generally emerging triumphant, though on occasion with regrets, as in Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*.



Most discovery-of-illusion stories that are not personal records can be read as disguised autobiography. In an important sense, Fitzgerald is on the air mattress when Jay Gatsby is murdered, and Flaubert joins Emma Bovary in a communal meal of arsenic so that he can say with some truth afterwards, "*Madame Bovary, c'est moi.*" Such stories are also about survival under testing circumstances: The author, having put all in hazard, has passed through the veil of illusion, and perhaps gone through hell in the process, but like Coleridge's Ancient Mariner has come back to tell his story for the benefit of an audience of less-privileged mortals.

It was clear enough in the early realists that there is a romantic excitement in the discovery of the fraudulence of romantic or idealistic vision—especially when the discoverer runs the risk of establishment opposition, as Cosell lets us know he did. The discoverer even repeats the formula of all true romance: no living without loving and no loving without risking, except that for him loving is not a self-transcending and life-enhancing commitment to another person (who may turn out not to be worth the risk) but to truth. And here, too, Cosell returns us to familiar territory—territory occupied for some time now by the antihumanist poststructuralists who have been trying to teach us that the pursuit of the truth (even if the truth is pursued from the faith position of a dogmatic skepticism) can be less complicated and more exciting than the pursuit of the human person. This suggests that, *mutatis mutandis*, many sports lovers will prefer John Madden's *Hey, Wait a Minute!* to Cosell's new book for much the same reason that many lovers of literature still prefer Lionel Trilling's *The Liberal Imagination* to Paul de Man's *Allegories of Reading*.

* * *

There is something very boyish about the American's disillusionment with the world of sports and games. The disillusionment is a painful end of innocence laced with nostalgia for a pastoral of childhood when games were played for their own sake, the way poets are supposed to make poems. "Children who play life," Thoreau writes in *Walden*, "discern its true law and relations more clearly than men, who fail to live it worthily, but who think that they are wiser by experience, that is, by failure." The true law and relations of life are never more scandalously violated than when athletes, whether amateurs or professionals, defect from their ascetic code for fame or power or money. The 1919 White Sox scandal still ranks in infamy with Teapot Dome, Watergate, and Ezra Pound's broadcasts

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for Mussolini. In Hemingway's "My Old Man" and Sherwood Anderson's "I Want to Know Why"—both racetrack stories in which sensitive youths are traumatized by the moral defections of adult sportsmen—it is the failure of the adult world to support the innocent expectations of adolescence in all matters, not simply in sport, that is at issue. Similarly, in Ring Lardner's "Champion" the boxer Midge Kelly stands for all the boorishness and hypocrisy in American culture.

Wasn't Lardner right, Maxwell Geismar once asked, "in believing that a nation's sports (like an individual's humor) was the real key to its character"? On the evidence of his book, Cosell would have to agree. After all, he is a serious writer, concerned ultimately with issues that transcend sport, just as Thoreau is concerned with issues that transcend the flora and fauna of his Walden habitat. Every chapter of *I Never Played the Game* is headed with a quotation from a writer not generally the topic of locker-room conversation: Byron, Scott, Shaw, Machiavelli, Emerson, Camus, Milton, Homer, Frost, Sam Johnson, Dana, and St. Paul. Whether the quotations are indications of the more literate heights from which Cosell has descended or have been contributed by editorial assistant Peter Bonventre, they have the effect of reinforcing the book's concern with duplicity, incompetence, and greed. Cosell is, in fact, as much in the tradition of Puritan didacticism as Thoreau, who cannot eat a fried rat without making the event an occasion for a lay sermon.

One consequence is that Cosell, like Thoreau and the exposé journalists, must rank honesty and courage ahead of charity and prudence. The traditional ranking is the reverse of this, the reason being the hard-learned lesson that unless the priority of charity and prudence is honored, even institutionalized, honesty and courage can easily go to fanatic or destructive extremes. If it is honesty, not charity, that covers a multitude of sins, then the covering may only be a way of liberating the sins so effectively that they masquerade as virtues. If it is courage that is the master virtue, then society may have to find a way not only to live with but also to honor some of its most ruthless enemies.

The trouble is that charity and prudence are slow virtues, designed to keep human affairs moving at a manageable pace. Those imbued with them are inclined to presume, for instance, that if they can restrain their impulses to take immediate corrective action, then what appears to be contradictory in many personal, social, or political situations may turn out to be complementary, or what appears to be justice may turn out to be revenge. Such disciplined forbearance assumes a faith that manifest defects in the social or political order do not argue against its basic congeniality with human need. People like Thoreau and Rousseau, for whom society as currently organized is absurd or morally offensive, or who, like Cosell and Alceste in Moliere's *The Misanthrope*, experience the contradictions and hypocrisies of society as an almost intolerable burden, either do not have that faith or have painfully lost it. The world being the way it is, they tend to live in an atmosphere of crisis in which charity and prudence are at best unaffordable luxuries and in which only the fast virtues of honesty and courage promise salvation. In their darker moments, it may even seem to them that hypocrisy and cowardice are the engines that make society go.

In our society it is quite proper to let others know that one has honesty and courage—especially if one has first passed the risky money test. The publication of this fact may even be a display of bravery: One is not afraid of being called a boaster. In a world made hypocritical and cowardly by money, one may even, like Thoreau, feel morally obligated to hold oneself up as a model. Thus Cosell, who had the honesty to "tell it like it is" about the NFL, needed the courage, as he tells us frankly, to give up "millions of dollars" and "suffer tremendous vilification in print" for his actions.

* * *

If society does not institutionalize its valuation of courage, it will not survive long enough to discover its capacity for charity or prudence. Society also depends at all times on the willingness of some to tell it like it is, whether they risk Socrates' hemlock or the loss of a profitable connection with ABC. Therefore, society has no alternative to honoring the courageous truth-tellers. The problem at any given time is to distinguish those truth-tellers who put charity and prudence first from those who do not. The latter, especially in a message-crammed, pluralistic, and skeptical world such as ours, might be honestly concerned with improving the world and might even improve it, but they are also likely to be scandalmongers addicted to the pleasure of discovering and publicizing the falsity of established truth, or pointing to the rot behind the facade of gorgeous growth. They risk becoming captives of the romance of corruption in which the distinction, crucial to civilization, between responsible truth-telling and scandalmongering is blurred or obliterated. They may appear to pass the money test even as they enrich themselves with best-sellers.

The romance of corruption is demystifying, secularizing, and reductive, so that among possible interpretations of action only the lowest, the meanest, the most demeaning, the rottenest, or the ugliest is considered authentic. In this romance the good news is that the supply of the right kind of

Chapter and Verse for Liberation Theologians

(John 6:26-27)

by Diana Shaw

They followed Him for fish,
A crumb of bread,
A morsel in a dish,
While what He said

Fell on deaf ears. The Word,
The spirit's food,
Was little sought or heard;
The earthly good

Was all they valued, sued
Or followed for.
They cast away the fruit
And kept the core!

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bad news, unlike the supply of oil, is beyond danger of depletion. The wide appeal of this romance has made the production and circulation of exposé literature a growth industry. Nor is the romance confined to the world of tabloid journalism; the exposé impulse is conspicuously at work in all levels of writing, particularly in biography, where the reader has learned to expect both the warts and the hairs on the warts.

It would be a mistake to oversimplify the appeal of this romance, as if it were an utterly perverse kind of muckraking. Exposé literature gives a double pleasure: the pleasure of a vision of life in the high places of power, prestige, or virtue enriched by the pleasure of a demystifying second version of that vision. The exposé literature purporting to tell the dirty truth about John F. Kennedy does not so much cancel out the legend of Camelot as feed on it. As Dan Jenkins, author of *Semi-Tough*, says of *I Never Played the Game*: "If you don't like this book, you don't like finding out the truth about sports and having fun learning it."

The romance of corruption is demystifying, secularizing, and reductive, so that among possible interpretations of action only the lowest, the meanest, the most demeaning, the rottenest, or the ugliest is considered authentic.

This double attraction, in which the traditional order of virtue is reversed in favor of honesty and courage, if not simplified by omitting charity and prudence altogether, is an important feature in movies like *Death Wish* 3, *Rambo: First Blood Part II*, and *To Live and Die in L.A.* Such movies are exposé entertainment, the inside dope about the rotten establishment, in which a moralistic celebration of honesty and courage keeps impulses to charity and prudence from contaminating the self-indulgent and popcorn-nourished pleasure of sadistic violence. To the extent that they are ways not of contending with evil but of exploiting it for pleasure, they are insincere in their apparent commitment to good social order. Of course, any dramatization of honesty and courage, regardless of context, might have redeeming personal or social value, since it is always possible that particular viewers will transvalue the context. However, movies of this kind strenuously resist such transvaluing. They imply, as does so much exposé literature, a voguish and sentimental conviction that civilization, as it is constituted, is bound to deteriorate no matter how much virtue is expended in its defense—as if their makers had read and never recovered from Rousseau's two discourses on the effects of the arts and sciences and the origins of inequality.

If honesty and courage are to be adequately defined as sufficient virtues, they need a dramatic context in which charity and prudence are defined as being hypocritically on the side of evil. This is the way it is in *Rambo*, and the effect is relief from the burden of distinguishing between revenge and justice, just as Christina Crawford's *Mommie Dearest* and Kenneth Anger's two *Hollywood Babylon* books give relief from the burden of distinguishing between scandalmongering and the kind of charitable and prudent truth-telling that does not simply replace one hyperbolic interpretation with another.

The problem, of course, is the human appetite for revenge and the human capacity to blur the distinction between revenge and justice in the interest of feeding that appetite. It is easy enough to conclude while watching *Death Wish* 3 that the audience is greatly enjoying the experience of revenge and that the movie is conniving with the audience by making it easy to identify the passion for revenge as a passion for justice. But this might be true for part of any audience watching Shakespeare's *Lear* or the much-admired movie *High Noon*. In each, the dramatic pitch demands a parity between violent crime and violent punishment, so that each can serve as a blank check to be filled out by each viewer according to his need for vengeance. An important difference, however, is that *Lear* and *High Noon*, unlike *Death Wish* 3, offer significant resistance to any attempt to blur the distinction between justice and revenge and to detach honesty and courage from all considerations of charity and prudence—a detachment that characterized the public's initial reaction to Bernhard Goetz's heroics in the New York subway.

The priority of honesty and courage helps to articulate victimization in a world where the sense of victimization is as pervasive as the discontent with civilization from which it is inseparable. Articulated victimization is an important factor in the success of Cosell's *I Never Played the Game*. Who cannot empathize with a "loyal employee" who for 30 years "had busted his ass for the network" only to be treated shabbily? Victimization, violently correctible by individuals or groups acting outside established but ineffective or corrupt regulations, is what *Rambo: First Blood Part II*, *Death Wish* 3, and *To Live and Die in L.A.* are about. It is also what the IRA and Shiite Hezbullahs are about, so that such movies can be said to explain terrorism by giving the experience of it from the terrorists' point of view. This is an agreeably simplified philosophy in which justice and revenge are synonyms; it is ideal for all those who have too long busted their asses for unappreciative masters or who have been tricked into investing too much of themselves in enterprises that were probably fraudulent to begin with. Now undeceived, they are able to see themselves not as having been imprudent simpletons but as innocent victims whose radical honesty, having been cynically exploited, is now courageously identified in full view of the victimizers.

* * *

The disillusioning revisions of the exposé writer have much in common with the Indian purification ritual known as the "busk," which Thoreau encountered in William Bartram's late-18th-century account of his travels in the southeastern United States and about which he writes admiringly in *Walden*. This ritual, a cultural spring housecleaning, involved a gathering together of the worn out, the filthy, the useless, and the rotten in order to throw it away or burn it. Thoreau sees it as a sacrament; indeed, as R.W.B. Lewis notes in *The American Adam*, *Walden* itself can be read as a "metaphoric expansion of Bartram's busk."

It is hard to imagine a nonbusking society. Perhaps one could write a history of the human race in terms of the

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motives and composition of its purifying bonfires. Such a history might very appropriately begin with the busk of the Garden of Eden as depicted in Milton's *Paradise Lost* and end with the ironically observed grand busk that is intended to be a fiery preliminary to the return to Paradise in Hawthorne's "Earth's Holocaust." Somewhere in the darker chapters there would have to be accounts of Savonarola's busking of scandalous books and artifacts in the late 15th-century Florence and the Goebbels-directed busking of books displeasing to the Nazis in 1933 Berlin. Along the way, of course, one would read of countless ritual burnings of witches, heretics, traitors, and other political, ethnic, or social undesirables—to say nothing of the busking of such master buskers as Savonarola and Hitler themselves.

Perhaps an appendix to this history could take note of a form of busking much favored by those disaffected souls who, driven nearly mad by the hypocrisy, pettiness, and all-around venality of bourgeois life, prefer a purification by excrement. In correspondence with Turgenev in the 1870's, for instance, Flaubert writes that he is so overwhelmed by public stupidity that he is planning a book (*Bouvard and Pecuchet*) "in which I shall try to spit out my rancor" and hopes "not to die before having emptied a few more buckets of shit on the heads of my fellow men." The excremental imagination (see it at work in the fiction of Norman Mailer) substitutes the flushing toilet for the cleansing fire. Its aim is less charitable renewal than adequate revenge. Its proper hero is Hercules, who, after he had diverted two rivers to flush 30 years of cattle droppings out of the Augean stables, killed King Augeas in revenge for refusing payment.

The ritual of the busk is about the paradoxical interdependence of destruction and recreation that has in the past two centuries led both wistful and frustrated utopians to place so much value on iconoclasm, trashing, and desecration. The interdependence makes it hard to distinguish between savior and terrorist, justice and revenge, piety and obscenity. Obscenity, for instance, is valued as a way of telling it like it is in the interest of a temporary or lasting liberation from the overawing pieties that threaten autonomy and authenticity, and is therefore traditional piety transvalued. In movies as in fiction now, it is the conventional *lingua franca* with which one honestly and courageously assaults the barriers of censorship that protect the institutionalized injustices and hypocrisies of society. It is a revenge for the crippling refinements of language and the impoverishment of life that they entail. In *Death Wish* 3 and the Rambo films, it works in synergistic combination with the copious flow of blood to effect a violent and vengeful busking. The blood, like the obscenity, is the evidence that these movies refuse to flinch and must therefore be taken seriously. Its counterpart is the flow of semen in pornographic films, which are busking desecrations of overawing sexual pieties.

It may be that such movies express the culture's inability to distinguish between positive and negative buskings, even its inclination to perceive the effort at making this distinc-

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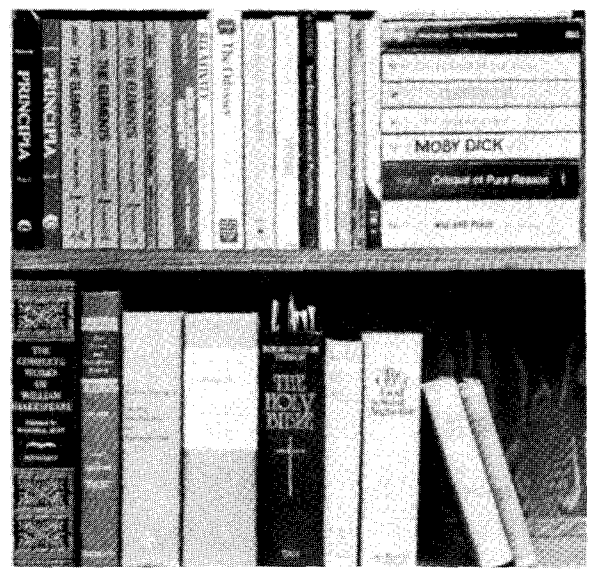

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tion a sign of cultural rot, but in their own way they pay homage to the human need for regeneration through self-transcendence, if only in the form of an avenging discovery of our common victimization. The demonstration that there is enough honesty and courage around to make such an experience possible is itself a comfort: At the very least it promises more of the same.

This promise is common in the literature about Hollywood that tells it honestly and courageously like it is. Kenneth Anger's *Hollywood Babylon II*, published about the same time as Cosell's book, is a good example. Anger is as entertainingly undeceived about the likes of Tallulah Bankhead, James Dean, Grace Kelly, Joan Crawford, John Belushi, and Busby Berkeley as Cosell is about Reggie Jackson, Herschel Walker, Carol Rosenbloom, Sonny Liston, Casey Stengel, and Pete Rozelle. Since his book is a romance of corruption, it is no more likely to discourage moviegoing and star worship than *I Never Played the Game* is likely to discourage fans from watching Monday night football. For all its moralism, it can be read as catering to the public's need to admire an elite of privileged souls, whether movie stars or rock stars, that is courageous and honest enough not to accept restraints on its appetites.

One might say that Cosell's and Anger's books tell us less about the way the world is than the way it can appear in a currently favored perspective that promotes negative busking. Nevertheless, in the books of each there is the imprint of another more traditional, even conservative, perspective: The disillusionment is measured against an implied ideal state of affairs, as it must be if the disillusionment is to have both nostalgic enrichment and critical bite. For Anger it is what Hollywood would be if its most favorable vision of itself were taken straight: a place where beautiful people live beautiful lives in circumstances where there is no distinction between ethics and aesthetics. Since such a bedazzling place exists only in our duped imaginations, it deserves a vengeful and liberating trashing. For Cosell it is a golden time when games were played purely for fun and were un-self-conscious displays of manly virtue for civilized and admiring spectators—a time analogous with what Rousseau imagined nascent civilization to have been before things began to go downhill. Burt L. Standish's Frank Merriwell played grandly for Fardale Prep and Yale in such a time. Once for Yale, in a spirit of utter self-transcendence, Merriwell hit a game-winning home run that would have made Reggie Jackson's famous tape-measure blast in the 1971 All-Star Game look like a Texas Leaguer. But that was long ago, before the rot set in.

* * *

For Cosell, as for many others, the rot becomes apparent to the degree that the once civilized and admiring spectators become possessed by the "'fan' kind of thinking." This kind of thinking, in *Cosell*, is a fanaticism that "results from the disproportionate emphasis placed upon sports in America" and is connected with our proneness to assassination attempts. The subject, he concedes, "is deeply psychological and complex"—hardly to be explained, as he says later in *Like It Is*, by too much beer-drinking in the stands.

Jeffrey Richards has much to say about the complexity of this subject in "The Hooligan Culture" (*Encounter*, November 1985), an analysis of the barbarous and often lethal conduct of British soccer fans. Richards put Cosell's "fan kind of thinking" in a broad cultural context, seeing it as a breakdown of value systems that put a premium on good manners and self-discipline. But the value systems to which Richards refers (and their counterparts in American culture to which he might have referred) encourage good manners and self-discipline because they assume a structuring order of virtue that inspires faith in the "slow" virtues of charity and prudence and at the same time makes it hard to reduce good manners to hypocrisy and self-discipline to a craven fear of one's creaturely self. This is a hard faith, constantly put to the test in the recurring crisis of the human condition, in which honesty and courage become the virtues of desperation.

The fan kind of thinking always goes with the bonus of an easy self-transcendence in circumstances where to face up to the complexity of motivation and multiplicity of options is to risk boredom, frustration, or anomie. It is therefore a morale-raising response to the demoralizing reductions of exposé revisionism, just as Harlequin and Candlelight romances are morale-raising responses to a demoralizing skepticism about the possibility of self-transcendence through passionate love. One of the ironies of imprudent and uncharitable truth-telling, therefore, is the ease with which, by virtue of its own impassioned and often vengeful simplifications, it can create a faith-vacuum into which rush even more passionate simplifications. The demystifier, having failed to take into account the human uneasiness with disillusioning reductions, becomes an accomplice to remystification—which seems to have been the fate of Albert Goldman, despite his efforts in *Elvis* to deflate the legend of Elvis Presley.

But if the fan kind of thinking is a form of mystification, it is at the same time perfectionist in its implied commitment to a state of affairs so manifestly and securely just that it would no longer need the support of fanatic effort. Whether we see it acted out in the sports arena or in the violent buskings of IRA bombers and Shiite terrorists, it anticipates as its justification a world so utopianly structured by the old order of virtue that both heroes and antiheroes could be decently retired. Indeed, those who put the fast virtues of desperation first must often enough, in the interests of their own morale, find a way to defer to the priority of charity. Thus Rambo, speaking for himself as well as his duped and victimized comrades in arms, wants "our country to love us as we love it." So his M-15 survival knife (replicas of which are available commercially for $4.00) is just as much a charitable instrument as a Jacobin guillotine, a Shiite jihad, or a Soviet gulag.

Apparently it is not always easy to deny our charitable impulses, no matter how the virtues are reordered. Perhaps even Flaubert should be given a charitable benefit of the doubt. Suppose that somewhere deep in his cantankerous and bored soul there flickered a hope that the buckets of shit he longed to empty on the heads of the hated bourgeois would in the long run turn out to be fertilizer for a vigorous and utterly inoffensive new life. Nevertheless, prudence (which must always stay close to charity to protect it from dangerous transvaluations) suggests that he was the kind of rot-detector for whom such an eventuality would have been the worst kind of good news.

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POLITICS OF WEAKNESS *by Steven Goldberg*

In the 1980's the doctrine of sexual equality is increasingly being misapplied. The current discussion of women's sports provides a graphic illustration. The central premise of the sexual egalitarian is simple: It is unjust to reward or support a woman less than a man, when the woman performs on the same level.

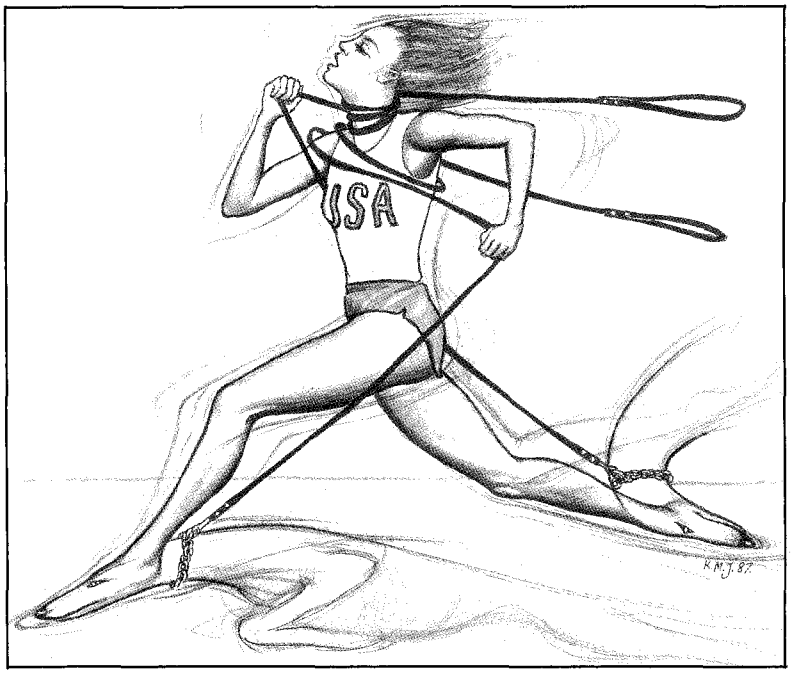
Many would agree that this should be the minimal expectation of a just society. Reward based on performance satisfies the requirements of both fairness and the social good. The egalitarian who really believes in equal opportunity and rejects gender as a determinant of reward will let the chips fall where they may. He will accept the possibility that reward based on ability—a criterion that serves women well in all but athletics—will result in lesser rewards for women athletes. Such an inequality is the unavoidable result of rewarding ability, a policy that in all other areas of life is regarded as consistent with fairness.

Sometimes, however, egalitarianism is no more than a political device to be jettisoned whenever it fails to reward a group that has been targeted—justly or not—to receive special privileges. In this case, the egalitarian will not worry about consistency, for he wishes to have it both ways: equality of opportunity when it will bring about equal reward for the group he represents, and equality of result when equality of opportunity will be of no avail.

In the case of educationally disadvantaged groups, one might argue that a temporary suppression of equal opportunity (i.e., "compensatory socialization") will permit the reintroduction of a merit system. Such an argument may or may not be correct but is not, on the face of it, absurd. On the other hand, it is absurd to suggest that by temporarily giving equal reward to the inferior athletic performance of women we shall eventually enable women to compete, on an equal footing, with male athletes.

The blunt truth is that women are terrible at sports. To say this is to make a statistical statement that is less than absolute, as is the case with virtually any statement to be made about men and women. When we say that men are taller than women, we do not deny that some women are taller than some men. We only mean that at any equivalent percentile of men and of women, the men will be taller. Likewise, Martina Navratilova is undoubtedly a better tennis player than 99 percent of males, but she would be easily defeated by the best 200 or 300 male players. No woman is ever going to run as fast as the ninth-grade male champion of her time or be as strong as a strong ninth-grade male. There are 100 high-school basketball teams that would defeat the best female team in the world by 50 points, and the same could be said for any other sport. The increasing use of male hormones to build up the strength of female athletes makes the point all too plain.

There is an astonishing regularity over a wide range of measurable sports, in the relationship of male and female world records. Nearly always the difference is approximately 10 percent. This doesn't sound like much until we remember there are, depending on the popularity of the sport, hundreds or thousands of men whose performance is within 10 percent of the record. It is true that the male record from 50 years ago is, in a few sports, inferior to the female record of today. But this only demonstrates that records are reduced by far more than 10 percent per half-century and that all physiologically rooted differences are outcomes of varying responses to environmental cues. If females were forced to do endless hours of weightlifting, while males were prohibited from all physical activities, it is theoretically possible that females would be stronger. But this is no more relevant than an experimental program for force-feeding women and starving men.



A consistent belief in the central premise justifying sexual egalitarianism would be disastrous for women's athletics. Sex-blind sports are single-sex sports, and the sex is male. There are, at every college, hundreds of males who are unable to make the men's team but who are still better than some of the women on the women's team in any given sport. Also, there are many men better than *any* woman on a women's team. The silliest argument for equal expenditure redefines superiority in women's sports in terms of form and beauty. This will become a serious argument when the Women's Wimbledon Championship is awarded to the most graceful or beautiful player.

For professional sports the issue of equality is fairly straightforward. Reward depends on the ability to attract spectators. While this is not identical to excellence of performance, the correlation is very high—far higher, for example, than in literature or music. Magic Johnson and Larry Bird, for instance, are paid enormous salaries because

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Nancy Lieberman is one of the world's best female players but insufficiently talented to make a male professional team. She has no female professional league to play in because few spectators are willing to pay to see women in a sport that is played so much better by men.

they rank among the very best basketball players in the world, and because they attract spectators. Nancy Lieberman is one of the world's best female players but insufficiently talented to make a male professional team. She has no female professional league to play in because few spectators are willing to pay to see women in a sport that is played so much better by men.

Tennis is the one sport that is something of an exception to all of this. Women unquestionably attract many more spectators than their ability would justify. Here the close talent-attraction relationship does not apply. If, as may have happened for a short period about 12 years ago, the women could attract as large a crowd as the men, an irresistible argument could be made for equal reward. Today, however, the female players do not attract as many spectators, but their contribution still exceeds their relative ability.

For school and college athletics, the situation is much more complicated. However, the complication does not stem from any problem directly related to equal reward. If equal reward were the only consideration, a school or college could merely field a single team equally open to both male and female students. In practice, of course, the team would typically be composed entirely of males, but this would be a result of nothing more than equal opportunity and superior male ability. The complication is produced by the ambiguous purposes of college athletics. The opposite, but just as fair, alternative to the "one-team" approach would be a denial of the educational value of a performance-reward criterion, by emphasizing the educational advantages of athletic involvement and by spending equal amounts on all students. This intramural approach better approximates other aspects of education (no one suggests that we allocate all educational resources for the best 1 percent of students). But this solution faces two problems: (1) the public overwhelmingly supports big-time competition between colleges and between schools; and (2) it is such competition that supports unprofitable varsity teams (including women's varsity teams), junior varsities, freshman teams, and intramural sports, thereby protecting other educational resources from a parasitic drain of funds.

It is an American belief, as deeply held as it is unverified, that participating in athletics improves individuals and provides valuable role models for the less-athletically talented. It has always seemed to me that athletic participation is far more an arena for manifestation of character than for its improvement. Though sports do, to an extent, serve to improve character, so do a large number of other experiences and enterprises not compromised by the dangers so evident from a majority of reports on the sports pages.

Nonetheless, since those who pay the bills believe in the educational value of athletics, and since this belief may conceivably be correct, it does seem only fair that female teams be supported—even if that support comes from the profitable male teams. The 150-pound football teams fielded by some colleges provide us with a vaguely analogous precedent. But that is no argument whatever for the equal support of women's teams.

What is the principle that justifies our supporting and rewarding intercollege and interschool teams and competitions for women but not for the large numbers of men who—while not sufficiently talented to make the men's teams—are more talented than all or some of the women on the women's teams? Precisely what is the justification for having a woman's basketball team but not a basketball team of Japanese-American students? Both are made up of individuals who are—for physiological reasons—insufficiently talented to make the male varsity, and both are teams that usually lose, rather than make, money for the taxpayer.

REVISIONS

Fantasia

Military men are rarely honored in peacetime, and soldiers who find themselves on the wrong side of history are liable to be subjected to any indignity. Achilles dragged Hector around the walls of Troy but in the end granted his enemy a decent burial. German soldiers are not so fortunate, and in Klaus Theweleit's *Male Fantasies*, with a forward by Barbara Ehrenreich (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press; $25.00) the reader is treated to a psychoanalysis of diaries, letters, memoirs, and popular novels, all of which "prove" that the Freikorpsmen of post-World War I Germany were not only a gang of vigilantes out to suppress the proletariat, they also suffered from every sort of libidinal ailment imagined by Dr. Freud: "Could it be that the soldier's appetite for love is so large that he can't suppress it any longer when he spies sexual nourishment in the form of working-class girls? That in place of real stimulators, he hallucinates the object that always used to make him similarly excited: his own sister (though she is hazy and blurred). In that case, the soldier's attacks against working-class women, could be seen to be directed at the specter of his sister going around with another man, as revenge against the sister denying him love." Theweleit's prose is revealingly effeminate. Many of the Freikorps soldiers were thugs; others were unemployed veterans acting, more or less, as *Condottieri*, some were genuine patriots. Few, if any, deserve the necrophiliac attentions of Theweleit and Ehrenreich.

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MANLY CODES *by Chris Anderson*

When Chuck Yeager was shot down behind enemy lines in World War II, shrapnel wounds in his feet and hands, German Messerschmitts still above him, he remained calm and controlled. "Back home," he said, "if we had a job to do, we did it. And my job now is to evade capture and escape." When the engine of a fellow pilot failed during a later patrol, Yeager followed the plane to the ground, calmly giving instructions for adjusting the fuel mixture. "That was a close one," he said, once the danger was over. If Yeager had any feelings in these situations, he controlled them and wouldn't reflect on them later in his book. Repeatedly in his autobiography we are told of his reticence: Chuck "just isn't a talker," his wife says; "try as we might," one pilot remembers, "we couldn't get him to talk about his exploits."

Part of this is simply modesty. Part of it, too, is professional necessity, since only those capable of controlling their reactions and concentrating their energies can handle high-performance aircraft. The deeper issue, though, is Yeager's manly distrust of emotion coupled with an anti-intellectual suspicion of emotive language itself. He is both a country boy good with his hands and a highly skilled technician trained to react with unflinching efficiency in crises. He is a man of action, not words. It is only natural that he should "hate English worse than any other subject" and that he'd "rather fight a flame-out on the deck than battle a talk in front of a strange audience." Except for his own "pilot lingo," language for him is merely "BS." What journalists like to call the great "Unknown" becomes for him the great "Ughknown"—not a place of mysteries so much as a chance for screw-ups. "The Right Stuff" is merely an "annoying" phrase, "meaningless when used to describe a pilot's attributes. . . . All I know is I worked my tail off to learn how to fly, and worked hard at it all the way." For Yeager, claiming to have the right stuff would not only be immodest but also weak and emotional. From a West Virginia boy, such a claim would be uppity. From a test pilot, it would be imprecise.

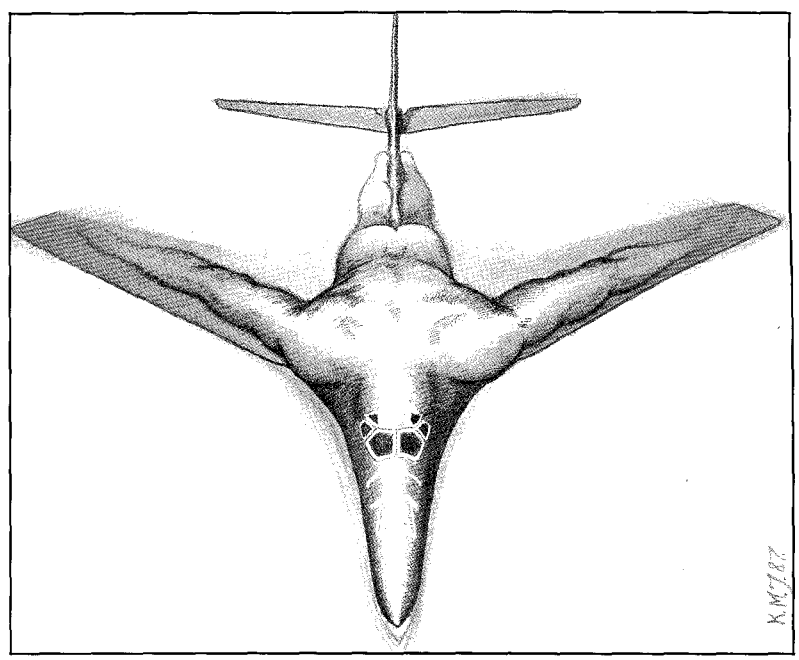
In this sense, Yeager belongs in the company of two other plain-speaking narrators in American literature; Huck Finn and Frederick Henry. In contrast with Cooper's long-winded Natty Bumpo, Twain's Huck Finn is a man—or rather, boy—of action without time for "sentimentering." Because he is a storyteller, Huck's language is earthy, free of "frills," and in his stories he rarely reveals more than traces of emotion. His fondness for conversation leads him to narrate a book several hundred pages long, yet his redneck aversion to display keeps him from admitting how he really feels about the major events in his story. Witnessing violence, Huck remains almost closemouthed.

Hemingway's Frederick Henry is the epitome of what Walker Gibson calls the "tough" voice in American literature—a "laconic, hard-bitten, close-talking fellow," as Gibson puts it, who "conceals his strong feelings behind a curt manner." His reticence stems from a deep distrust for abstract words as "obscene." "There were many words," Henry says, "that you could not stand to hear and finally only the names of places had dignity." Perhaps the best exemplar of this philosophy is Hemingway's Robert Wilson, the hard-bitten hunting guide in "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber." When Macomber begins to emote about his first experience of courage, Wilson replies, "Doesn't do to talk too much about all this. Talk the whole thing away. No pleasure in anything if you mouth it up too much."

Wilson could be a test pilot. He shares with Yeager not only "flat, blue, machine-gunner's eyes" but also his verbal economy.

Yeager belongs to the company of movie stars like Gary Cooper (who played Frederick Henry in the film), John Wayne, Charles Bronson, Clint Eastwood, and most recently, Sylvester Stallone. As Joan Mellon insists in *Big Bad Wolves*, the strong silent type has become the dominant model of manliness in American films since the Depression. With the popularity of Dirty Harry in the 70's, "male silence has been sanctified with almost religious fervor."

There are degrees and kinds of silence here. Dirty Harry's reticence is a response to the verbosity of politicians and bureaucrats. Indeed, part of the power of the strong silent types portrayed by Eastwood and Wayne is actually their command of language. When they say something, they mean it. Statements like "Go ahead, make my day" become popular slogans because they condense the determination and righteousness of the reticent hero. The laconic style has been viewed as manly ever since the days of Laconia. The strong, silent male is more than an American phenomenon, since restraint and understatement have always been



Chris Anderson is author of Style as Argument: Contemporary American Nonfiction *(Southern Illinois University Press).*

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prized as rhetorically effective. Even the Athenians admired the Spartans' style. Later, the oratorical Cicero may have been less typical of the Roman character than the more taciturn Cato and Caesar. A refusal to waste words often signals an allegiance to language—there is a difference between the characters and their creators. Huck Finn is only an invention. Behind him stands Mark Twain. Hemingway's characters, for all their reticence, are brought to life in powerful, tightly organized prose. In this sense, even Rambo qualifies as art. To the extent that Stallone succeeds in projecting Rambo's brutishness, he is relying on—and endorsing—an artistic language which Rambo himself would reject.

But in the recent books by astronauts and test pilots, the problem posed by narrative is quite different. Aldrin's *Returning to Earth*, Michael Collins' *Carrying the Fire*, Walter Cunningham's *The All-American Boys*, James Irwin's *To Rule the Night*, as well as *We Seven* and *First on the Moon*, the same curious rhetorical problem as in *Yeager* exists: a fundamentally inexpressive male is called upon to write about his experiences—aided, all too often, by professional journalists. It is as if Rambo had to make his own movie, or Dirty Harry write his own book.

It becomes more and more evident as we read the autobiography that Yeager's reticence is not rhetorical but a reflection of his genuine aversion to talk. He is a real man, and as a writer he seems determined to get out of the conundrum of having to write. To begin with, he uses a ghostwriter, Leo Janus, who can easily be blamed for any excesses. It is obvious in *Yeager* when the ghostwriter takes over, reshapes Yeager's own syntax and vocabulary (sentences like "On the previous flight, the bullet-shaped X-1 had zoomed me into the history books by cracking through the sound barrier" are surely not from Yeager's mouth). The narrative is further vitiated by the inclusion of chapters called "Other Voices," in which Yeager's wife and colleagues praise his virtues—a convenient way of describing Yeager's courage and ability without forcing him to violate the code himself.

A more fortunate way out of the real man's rhetorical bind is Yeager/Janus' development of a folksy version of the "tough" style. After the first few chapters, the ghostwriter gradually fades, and Yeager's countrified, fighter-jock slang comes to dominate the prose: "ass over tea kettle," "bitch of bitches," "break my hump," "near to killed me," "bought the farm," "augered in." The sentences become direct and simple. Like Yeager's frequent references to his West Virginia accent, lack of education, and "bad grammar" ("He barely spoke English," a friend says of his tangled syntax), his brevity is part of an effort to establish his credentials as a masculine plain-speaker. His short utterances reflect Yeager's understanding of the kind of masculine stereotypes about language that William Labov studied in an interesting experiment several years ago: New Yorkers' expectations of a male speaker's performance in a fight went up as the speaker's use of standard forms of English declined. Yeager may be forced into writing about his experiences, but as a Hemingwayan fighter he can avoid the predicament of unmanliness by refusing feminine standards of regulated English.

Rather than betray exhilaration or fear, Yeager and other pilots describe their experiences through what Tom Wolfe calls "codes"—stories, anecdotes, jokes, or concrete examples. They stick to the particulars, which then point to the feelings they want to express. Fighters become storytellers as opposed to emoters. Yeager as language-denier turns out to be a masterful narrator in his own vein as much as Huck Finn—though without Twain's ironic distance.

These same matters of masculinity and language are at the heart of an earlier book by Michael Collins, Command Module Pilot on Apollo II, who is quoted on the cover of *Yeager* as saying that "Chuck was never one to pull his punches." Collins, in *Carrying the Fire*, often adopts a Yeager-style gruffness. Like Yeager, he attacks the press for demanding that the test pilots express their feelings. Like Yeager, he is preoccupied with the technical intricacies of his work.

In many ways, *Carrying the Fire* is a better book than *Yeager*, and much more sensitive to language. There are a number of passages where Collins forcefully describes his personal feelings, without the aid of a ghostwriter. "What power," Collins says of maneuvering the T-38 fighter, "to command the position of the earth! What glee, to be able to do it smoothly and precisely!" Writing of his space walk during Gemini 10, he exclaims: "My God, the stars are everywhere. . . . We are gliding across the world in total silence, with absolute smoothness; a motion of stately grace which makes me feel God-like as I stand erect in my sideways chariot, cruising the night sky." Collins is not hesitant to communicate other feelings, either—the sense of "heightened consciousness" as he prepares for a mission or the tears he fights back when watching Apollo 8 lift off for the moon ("For some reason I felt like crying, but I couldn't do that in Mission Control, so I clapped a few good-working troops on the back and left").

More important for the ethos of the book is the literary ambition of Collins' writing. "I had left the tinsel-shiny, neon-bedecked high rollers of Las Vegas a few hours before," Collins says about his first visit to Edwards Air Force base, "ricocheting down the highway in an overheated 1958 Chevy station-wagon, seeking Valhalla or Mecca, or at least an opportunity to fight for admission into the arcane world of high-speed flight testing." Collins' sentences are balanced and sophisticated. The diction is erudite and metaphorical but not infrequently garish or even incorrect. "We dressed up in pressure suits," he writes at another point, "climbed to thirty-five thousand feet, got it going as fast as was legal (Mach 2), and then pulled back on the stick and zoomed upward as high as it would go. Trading kinetic energy for potential, up we would go, ever more slowly, until we floated over the top of a lazy arc in a not-so-bad simulation of the weightlessness of space."

Like Bumpo's, Collins' effusions are embarrassing at times. He often displays the hyperbole of the freshman composition student trying to sound like a writer. But the issue is not the quality of Collins' prose so much as its attitude toward the reader. Though *Yeager* is fast-paced, concrete, often humorous, it almost seems to violate a contractual agreement between writer and reader: Yeager holds back too much. We are soon made to feel that we are not a part of what Wolfe calls "the righteous brotherhood," and never can be. Yeager's writing is a temporary expedient

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rather than an attempt to make us insiders to an experience.

In contrast, despite all its floweriness and *Reader's Digest* descriptiveness (and partly because of that), *Carrying the Fire* welcomes the reader. Long sentences and fancy phrases can also cover up feeling and exclude outsiders, but Collins wants us to understand, to experience, to enter into the Command Module and see what he has seen. Because he is on the side of language, he is on our side, and so we forgive him for his purple passages.

As we learn in *First on the Moon*, Collins had a reputation at NASA as a deflator of "gobblygook." He is quoted as saying that "what the space program needs is more English majors." He dedicates his own book to "Ferdinand E. Ruge, Master of English at St. Albans School in Washington, who taught me to write a sentence."

Armstrong and Aldrin, on the other hand, are notoriously laconic, "extraordinarily remote," as Norman Mailer puts it in *Of a Fire on the Moon*. *First on the Moon* reports that when Armstrong and Aldrin respond to the congratulations of ground control with a mere "thanks a lot" after touching down on the lunar surface, then fall silent, Collins' wife, back in Houston, asks: "Why aren't they cheering?" then hastens to add, half-humorously, "I guess that's why they don't send a woman to the moon—she would jump up and down and yell and weep." And, when Collins later enthuses over a large lunar crater by saying, "God, it's huge! It's enormous! It's so big I can't even get it in the window. That's the biggest one you have ever seen in your life. Neil, God, look at this central mountain peak. Isn't that a huge one? . . . You could spend a lifetime just geologizing that one crater alone, you know that?" Neil simply says, "You could." Though Norman Mailer praises Collins for his "easy conversational manner," "Irish elegance," and "graceful manners," in the world of Apollo II, elegance and grace make Collins an outsider: Like Francis Macomber, he may have queered the experience by trying to talk about it.

We might tentatively say that in *Carrying the Fire* a gentler voice sets itself up—perhaps inadvertently—in a kind of creative tension with the voice of manly silence. In *Of a Fire on the Moon*, his book about Apollo II, Mailer characteristically transforms this tension into a full-scale war. From the beginning, he rails against the inability of the Apollo II astronauts to speak in any language but a technological "code," incapable of "philosophical meandering" or "nuances of feeling." For Mailer the reticence of the astronauts transcends the issues of masculinity, although the equation of heroism and manly silence goads him into asserting his own manhood as a writer. In this sense, perhaps, Mailer once again betrays himself as an all-too-typical urban, effeminate male pretending to be a tough guy.

At first glance, *The Right Stuff* seems rather different from *Of a Fire on the Moon*. Wolfe remains absent from the narrative, recreating the experience of the participants through omniscient third person narration. Because of his authorial silence, Wolfe's sympathies seem to be with the pilots he describes, which is probably why Bruce Feirstein in *Real Men Don't Eat Quiche* puts *The Right Stuff* in "The Real Man's Library," along with Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*. But it is difficult to believe that Wolfe shares the pilot's rejection of emotive language when his own writing is subtle and figurative. Even in Wolfe's most successful recreations of the language and experience of test pilots, the very "foregroundedness" of his style—to borrow a term from Tony Tanner—interposes a layer of irony. Reading him we say, here is Wolfe amplifying, repeating, piling up figures: We never forget that we are participating in a verbal performance.

Since the experience of the astronauts is fundamentally nonverbal, the journalist is by definition an outsider, someone who does not have the right stuff. But rather than perceive Wolfe as trapped in this quandary, we can see him exploiting it for his own purposes. Because he has continually emphasized that the astronauts represent realms of experience inaccessible to the journalist, the densely textured language comes to signify his allegiance to verbal expression and his identity as a writer. His literary stunts, swoops, and dives are a kind of dogfight with his subject.

Critics have recently argued that the increasing importance of nonfiction as a genre reflects our lost belief in fiction as interpretation. Nonfiction is grounded in "fact" and devoid of the commentary and shaping we once expected from a Victorian novel. In this view, the genre would belong with Huck and Robert Wilson and Yeager, as a rejection of "frills" which can no longer be sustained in our accelerated culture. Still, both *Of a Fire on the Moon* and *The Right Stuff* are efforts to assert the authority of the verbal against the threat of the nonverbal style flying in the face of manly reticence on the one hand and technological challenge on the other.

In the forthcoming issue of *Chronicles*:

Cultural Conservatism

"The old Episcopal Book of Common Prayer reminds us that we are surrounded by 'the communion of saints.' Indeed, in the course of life, one encounters a number of people—many in the most humble circumstances —whose impact is so intense that they are ever in mind. They remain a living presence long after they die physically. In such cases, it is hard to say whether the memory is less powerful than the man. And what, philosophically, is the difference between those physically alive but sleepwalking through their daily existence and those physically dead but alive in the being of others?"

—from "Transcendent Memory"
by Anthony Harrigan

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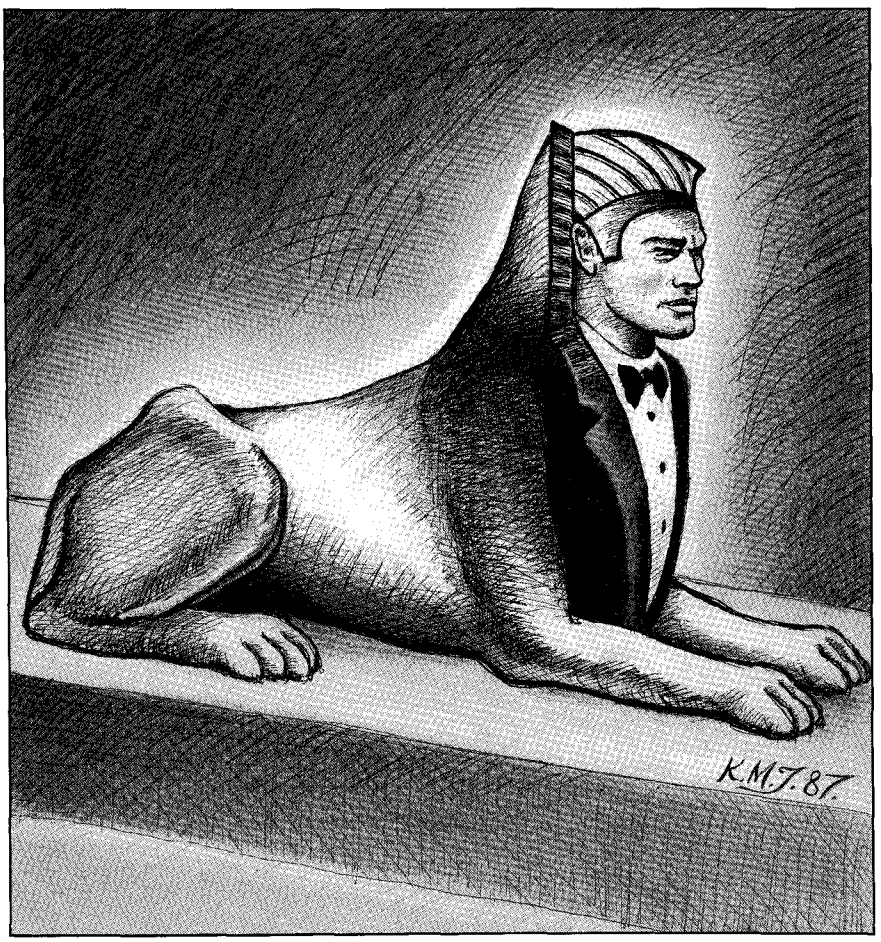
Character in Acting *by Forrest McDonald*

Franklin of Philadelphia by Esmond Wright, Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press; $25.00.

A Little Revenge: Benjamin Franklin and His Son by Willard Sterne Randall, Boston: Little, Brown; $22.50.

To 18th-century Britons and Americans who devoted any serious thought to the subject of human nature—and a great many did—the conventional starting point was the theory of the passions, or drives for self-gratification. Rousseau to the contrary, man was not naturally good but was ruled by his passions, both primary (fear, hunger, lust) and secondary (cravings for money, power, certainty, status). Reason could curb the passions only rarely and temporarily, and normally served merely as an agent of their fulfillment. Religion was still considered to be a necessary restraint upon them, but it was no longer thought to be a sufficient one. Given such a premise, the inevitable question arose, can man learn to comport himself morally, and therefore be free, or is he so thoroughly depraved that he is doomed to be oppressed by priests and tyrants?



Among those who contrived to reach an optimistic answer, perhaps the most common means was to posit a second premise, namely that the social instinct is one of the primary passions: The desire to secure the approval or at least to avoid the animosity of one's fellows ranks as strong as the need to satisfy physical appetites. This belief underlay the 18th century's intense preoccupation with what the adolescent George Washington described as "rules of civility." Every kind of social interaction—from ballroom dancing to warfare, from forms of address to the complementary closings of letters—became mannered, structured, stylized. Every person learned the norms that attended his station, and anyone who violated them forfeited the esteem of his peers and betters.

All this is fairly well-known to students of the period; what is less well-known is the related concept of character. In its most general signification, character meant reputation: So and so had a character for fickleness or probity or rashness. But it also, at least among persons in public life and polite society, meant a persona that one deliberately selected, cultivated, and attempted to live up to: A man picked a role, like a part in a play, and was expected to act it unfailingly: one must always be in character. If a fitting persona were chosen and worn long enough and consistently enough, it ultimately became a second nature that in practice superseded the first. In the end, one became what one pretended to be.

The results, for good or ill, depend-

Forrest McDonald is author most recently of Novus Ordo Seclorum: The Intellectual Origins of the Constitution *(University Press of Kansas).*

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ed upon the character and upon how well one played it. Miss Fanny Burney, in her extremely successful novel *Cecilia* (1782), depicts a rich variety of characters in fashionable London society, most of them rather shallow. There is a *voluble*, who sees everything in hyperbole and always talks faster than she thinks; there is a *jargonist*, who aspires to nothing but compliments in the "Lilliputian vocabulary" picked up in public places; there is a *supercilious*, who spends half her life desiring the annihilation of the other half. But the reigning arbiter of fashionable favor is the *insensibilist*, who affects boredom with everything, and thereby proclaims himself superior to all possibility of enjoyment. When Cecilia hears her mentor's description of these empty people, she remarks that they would sicken of their folly and change their ways if they could only hear themselves exposed. No, he replies, "they would but triumph that it had obtained them so much notice."

On the other hand, playacting could have an ennobling effect. Consider George Washington, who first sought the character of a gentleman, and then of a hero, and then progressively grander roles—self-consciously playing a part at every stage—until he had become Father of His Country and a veritable demigod. More common was the course followed by Thomas Jefferson, who struggled with a number of characters, even undergoing several changes of handwriting, until he found one he could play comfortably.

This brings us to Benjamin Franklin, the subject under review. Two new studies, both inspired at least in part by Yale's monumental edition-in-progress of Franklin's papers, have recently appeared. One is the work of a seasoned English student of 18th-century America, Esmond Wright, who has undertaken the first comprehensive biography of Franklin since Carl Van Doren's appeared in 1938. The other is the work of a gifted amateur, Williard Randall, who has focused upon Franklin's strange relationship with his bastard son, William. Wright's study is judicious and informed, although he has overlooked some of the best Franklin scholarship of the past several decades. Randall's is slanted and riddled with errors—yet it is a gripping tale in which William Franklin, as the last royal governor of New Jersey, emerges as a sympathetic and tragic-heroic figure.

Wright virtually ignores William, which is easy enough to do; except for a brief but impressive fling at soldiering, William's only permitted character until he was in his early 30's was that of the dutiful son. In that capacity, as Randall demonstrates, he was extremely helpful to a father who rarely gave him due recognition for what he did. (It was the son, for instance, not the father, who discovered that lightning moves from the earth to the heavens instead of the other way around, but Benjamin took credit for the discovery.) Then in 1762 William obtained, through his own connections, the appointment as governor of New Jersey. His character was now that of faithful servant to the King, and he played the role with great courage when the movement for independence came—suffering privation and imprisonment as a consequence, as well as never being forgiven by his father.

Both authors attempt to cope with the central and unavoidable problem in studying Benjamin Franklin: On the basis of the record as well as the judgments of contemporaries, Franklin appears to have been not one character but a multiplicity of them. His first important role is that of Poor Richard, the apostle of such bourgeois virtues as thrift, frugality, industry, honesty, independence, and the pursuit of wealth. Then comes the rationalist, inventor, and man of science, who demonstrates that lightning is electricity, invents the stove that bears his name, and advances sophisticated observations and theories about the movement of storms and the course and effects of the Gulf Stream. Next he has considerable success as a politician, gaining power as a demagogic champion of the people against the privileged few, while simultaneously becoming wealthy as a sycophantic placeman. (William indicated how far his character had departed from his father's when he remarked a few years later that "it is a most infallible symptom of the dangerous state of liberty when the chief men of a free country show a greater regard to popularity than to their own judgment.")

Meanwhile, Franklin is demonstrating his assorted skills as a city planner, military commander, and Indian negotiator, and became almost obsessed with gaining immense riches through grandiose land speculations. Years of service in London as agent for several colonies follow, years in which he lives voluptuously, joining hell-fire clubs and otherwise violating every Poor Richard adage. Then comes his ministry to France during the American Revolution, when he poses as the Natural Man, affecting a homespun republican simplicity and serving the American cause by obtaining indispensible aid from the French court. (Neither Wright nor Randall, by the way, deals with Cecil Currey's plausible argument that Franklin played a double agent in Paris, serving both Britain and the United States.) Penultimately, there is Franklin the wily diplomat, negotiating the Peace Treaty that recognizes American independence; and finally, there is the venerable sage at the age of 81, infusing the Constitutional Convention with wisdom, piety, and moderation.

Will the real Benjamin Franklin please stand up? Randall attempts to reconcile the several characters by ripping off the various masks and revealing Franklin's "true" character, in the 20th-century sense of the term. What emerges is a man of wit, charm, and talent who exploited and abused his son, deceived almost everyone, served his country, and was at bottom an opportunist and a scoundrel—what in Washington today would be called a survivor. Wright is more cautious. He quotes William Cobbett's description of Franklin as "a crafty and lecherous old hypocrite," and much of his narrative supports that depiction. But he also quotes Lord Kames's view that Franklin was "a great figure in the learned world . . . who would make a greater figure for benevolence and candor, were virtue as much regarded in this declining age as knowledge."

Wright sees beyond such judgments, however, and recognizes that Franklin was a self-made man in the literal sense, a manufacturer of myriad personae, a "manipulator of the strings to his own puppet marionettes." It is pointless to ask whether there was a "real" Franklin beneath all the personae, Wright suggests, for "Franklin became the parts he played, even if

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some of them were inconsistent and contradictory."

The conclusions of neither author are satisfactory. Randall wrenches Franklin from his 18th-century context, while Wright seems contented with Van Doren's conclusion that Franklin was "a harmonious human multitude." But what provided the harmony, the organizing principle, the larger character that unified the many small roles? I think it was this: Franklin set out at all times to play the part of the totally civilized and totally rational man, at once engaged and detached. By definition, it was impossible to play such a part; but, conceivably with the exception of Voltaire, Franklin came closer to pulling it off than any other man of the age.

Security Safari *by Odie B. Faulk*

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary, the Devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour."

—1 Peter, V, 8

Vigilantes in Gold Rush San Francisco **by Robert M. Senkewicz, S.J., Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press; $24.95.**

The scene is so identifiable that any American—in fact, almost anyone anywhere in the world—immediately recognizes it: a dun-baked, dusty street between rows of ramshackle, weather-beaten, false-fronted buildings. To the pounding beat of rising music, a noisy crowd suddenly pours out of a saloon and swarms down the street, drunkenness much in evidence, as a bloodthirsty simpleton at their front menacingly displays a rope with a noose at its end. Coming to a halt in front of the jail, one of them shouts, "Bring him out, Sheriff. We're going to see that justice is done. He won't get away this time."

The scene shifts inside the jail, where a helpless miscreant locked in his cell shouts to the sheriff and his deputy, who are cowering at the front windows, "You've got to protect me. Those people are crazy."

In countless movies and teleplays, the accused somehow is saved by a Texas Ranger . . . or U.S. Marshal . . . or just a guitar-picking "hero-off-the-street." Showing tremendous courage, he convinces the drunken crowd that real justice lies with the law. "No matter what he's done or not done," says our hero about the accused, "he deserves a fair trial. Let's let the judge and jury decide his fate. Now go on home." This note of sobriety usually makes the chastened mob aware that their actions have been worse than unconstitutional—they have been downright un-American.

Now that Westerns are no longer in vogue, the scenario has shifted to a New York subway in the 1980's. Tired of the extortion and terrorism of neo-barbarians, a rider pulls out a pistol and shoots his tormentors—and a long-suffering public applauds his actions loudly. Commentators in the print and broadcast media, with visions of themselves as sheriff, ranger, marshal, and/or hero-off-the-street, immediately come forth to berate the public, saying that the accused deserved a day in court where a judicial system would ensure a fair trial and correct punishment. "We can't have vigilantes loose on our streets," the media shouts. "No matter what the accused had done, they deserve a trial in a court of law."

When this drama was played for real last year, the common thread among liberal commentators was that vigilantism was evil. It was not the criminals who had erred, but rather society in general and the vigilante in particular. This shooting, the media agreed, reflected a nation where "violence is as American as apple pie," and the vigilante, they stated or implied heavily, had seen too many John Wayne movies.

The best-known example of vigilantism in the United States actually happened not in some remote area or in some small town. Nor was it done by someone emulating John Wayne. It happened on the streets and in the counting houses of San Francisco and was perpetrated by that city's outstanding businessmen. In 1851 and again in 1856, vigilance committees were organized in the city by the bay, and each of these organizations dispatched malefactors to the next world by means of hemp justice.

As was the case in New York City, these actions were not taken because of an absence of law. In California, as in the rest of the American Southwest, there had never been a "lawless" period, thanks to a smooth transition from Indian to Spanish to Mexican to American law. There was no abrupt break as political control changed hands.

When the Argonauts arrived in Cal-

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ifornia, they found a fully developed legal structure in the European sense—a heritage of three centuries of Spanish exploration, settlement, and development. This legal system was based on Roman law, not the English common law, but it had been modified to fit the necessities of life in the New World, as, for example, in the matters of water, mineral, and agricultural law.

In 1778 Commandant-General Teodoro de Croix had issued a decree demanding that brands should be registered so that ranchers would know their property and be able to prove legal title to it. It was the Spaniards who introduced the concept of "prior appropriation" in water law, so different from the English concept of riparian right but which obtains today in most Western states. And it was Spanish law that dictated the rules for mining claims—their size and their registration.

In 1850, with the creation of the state of California, the first legislature (known as the "Legislature of a Thousand Drinks" because it adjourned so frequently for liquid refreshment) enacted a code of laws based on the better part of both Spanish and American legal heritages. There was no "lawless" period.

Those who came to California either to toil in the gold fields or to become merchants in San Francisco believed, as did most Americans of the 1850's, that law and justice were synonymous. They thought that the purpose of law was to protect life and property. As these pioneers went about their self-appointed means of livelihood, their purpose was survival and acquisition. They thought the various representatives of the law—town police, county sheriff, municipal officials, and judges—existed to protect society from the criminal, that life and property should be safe.

The vigilance committee in San Francisco, that of 1851 and that of 1856, were the result of a system that had broken down. Law and justice were not synonymous when "justice" was openly for sale by corrupt officials and law enforcement agents. Criminals were parading openly about the city unapprehended, while those who were apprehended often went unindicted or unconvicted. And even those who were convicted found ways to purchase a pardon or an escape.

The public, as usually is the case, was patient and long-suffering. By early 1851 criminals were operating almost unchecked. Bribery and corruption were the fashion among those supposed to be enforcing the laws. At last the merchants of the city, some 600 of them, banded together to form a vigilance committee. Their goal was to restore some balance between law and justice. Five years later the process had to be repeated when, owing to public apathy, the city had become an interlocking directorate of crime and political corruption. Vigilantes restored law and order.

Books and articles written about the vigilance committees of San Francisco, when arranged chronologically, reflect America's changing attitudes toward its past. Those writers nearest in time—and thus most familiar with the events—praise the vigilantes for making person and property secure. In more recent times, however, sociologists and New Left historians have condemned vigilantes whose activities were caused by "spouses, spatial relationships, and spurious sensationalism." Still other writers see the vigilantes as participants in a class struggle in which the merchants exerted their mastery over the lower classes.

In this work, a dissertation at Stanford, Senkewicz maintains that the vigilantes of 1851 were merchants who had gone west to get rich. Disappointed by hard economic times, they magnified the normal amount of crime into a crime wave and set out on a maddened search for a scapegoat. It was Australian immigrants who were elected to fill this role. "For no immediate reason," writes Senkewicz, a vigilance committee was formed from among what a contemporary called "the most intelligent, best educated, and property owning classes of the city." It called 91 miscreants before it, of whom 14 were deported from California, 14 more were strongly advised to leave, four were hanged, and one man was publicly flogged. Senkewicz concludes, "Probably there was some decrease in crime. . . . "

Of the vigilance committee of 1856, Senkewicz is far more critical. Its organization, he claims, was also caused by economic hard times. The members of the committee this time, he argues, were bigoted, Know-Nothing Protestants whose scapegoats were Irish immigrants, hated because they were Catholic, increasing in number, and starting their own schools. The accomplishments of the committee of 1856 were similar to those of 1851: four criminals were hanged, others chose to leave town for reasons of health, and there was a decrease in crime.

There are numerous other examples of vigilantism in the American West: in Montana, Arizona, and elsewhere. All reflect a desire common among Americans for safety of life and property. Distrust of lawyers, the courts, and the technicalities of the law were common. The history of the American West shows that when the courts were rendered supine, when law-enforcement officials became helpless, corruption rampant and abuse of authority widespread, common citizens banded together to enforce an *ad hoc* justice that restored security of person and property. When the ordinary citizens of a community felt justice was not being served through normal channels, they were quick to rectify "mistakes."

What is noteworthy about the vigilantes of San Francisco and elsewhere in the American West is not the number of men they hanged or ordered to leave town. What is significant is their restraint: When law and order were restored, when life and property became secure, the vigilantes disbanded, returning the responsibility for law enforcement to regularly constituted authorities. They were not power-mad politicos bent on ruling an area but common citizens who believed that "justice" and "law" should be synonymous.

Moreover, Americans throughout their history and in all sections of the country have shown a strong desire for security of person and property—as well as a distrust of the courts, of conniving lawyers, and of technicalities of the law. Ordinary citizens have been quick to turn against any movement that used random violence to attain its ends. For example, the efforts of labor to organize were severely damaged by the violence of Haymarket and Homestead in the 1880's and 1890's; the deaths caused in these two inci-

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dents set the cause of labor back some 40 years. Similarly, the student rioters of the late 1960's and early 1970's saw the public turn against them when they began using bombs that brought random danger to life and property.

In short, violence has not been "as American as apple pie"—except among historians and sociologists who bend the facts to suit their preconceived ideas. For anyone who has studied—and understood—American history, the wonder is not that San Franciscans twice rose up in public anger to restore security of life and property—or that in this age when the courts have been rendered inefficient and our jails have become revolving doors for criminals, one man recently pulled out a pistol to shoot subway terrorists; rather, the wonder is that far more riders of the subway are not wearing a brace of Mr. Colt's pistols to enforce *ad hoc* justice.

Players of the Game *by Bryce J. Christensen*

". . . to chase the rolling circle's speed
Or urge the flying ball . . . "

—Thomas Gray

Snake by Ken Stabler and Berry Stainback, New York: Doubleday; $15.95.

***The Mick* by Mickey Mantle and Herb Gluck, New York: Doubleday; $15.95.**

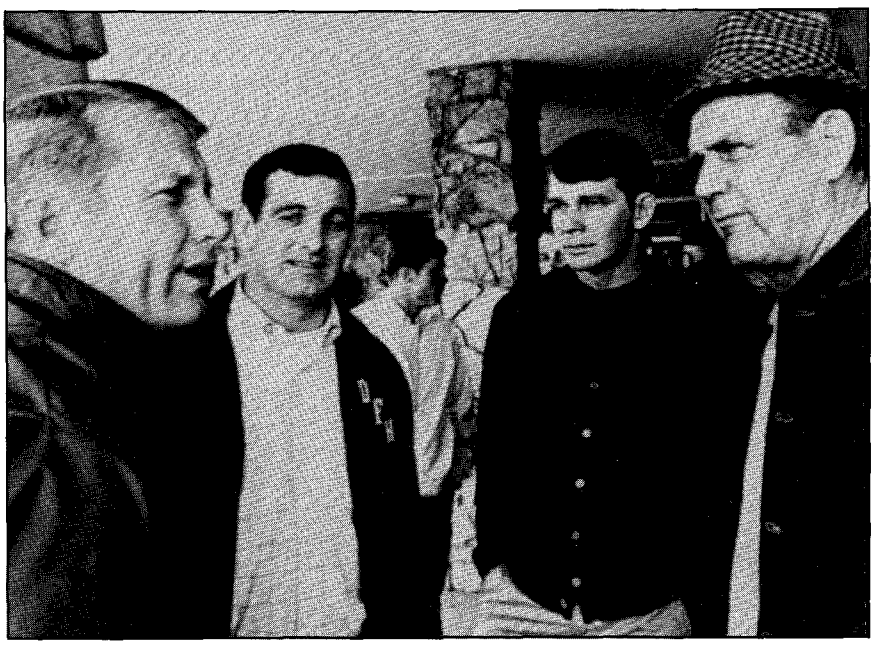
The Puritans, who once condemned stool ball, quoits, and bowls, would stand in stern judgment of the millions of Americans who every Sunday choose a ball game over church attendance. Yet game-playing did *begin* in ritual and religion, and the Latin word for temple, *fanum*, gave us the modern *fan*, applied to the sports enthusiast. In *Sports in the Western World* (1982), William J. Baker argues that "the actual beginnings of sport" may be found in "religious fear" and in "rituals designed to placate the unknown powers that people called gods."

Placating the gods does not appear to be the aim of modern sports, but participants and viewers alike do demonstrate an almost religious passion for pattern, for rules, and for triumph. As the sportswriter Skip Hollandworth put it: "Sports have all the trappings of religion, the sacred Sunday ritual of squatting by the television and rooting for the team of light over the team of darkness, the spectacle of uniforms and banners, the adoration of saint-like heroes, the desperate pleas for salvation and victory."

The apparently aimless flux of everyday life leaves a craving for order that must be satisfied—at the ball park, if not in the sanctuary, synagogue, or poetry seminar. And at a time when many of America's ecclesiastical leaders try to erase the distinctions separating men and women, sports at least still honors the God-given differences between the sexes. Because millions of American boys no longer participate in an annual harvest or hunt, all-male sports provide a much-needed alternative way to establish sex identity. Historically, as William Baker points out, the rise of the great modern team sports coincided with industrial urbanization and its attendant "exodus from the countryside into the cities." City folk craved some reminder of how men and boys once moved in rythmical harmony across the fields.

Still, popular games provide a poor recreation of lost agrarian patterns and an even poorer replacement for religious ritual. The rules and the objectives of sports lie lightly on the surface of the natural world, penetrating no deeper than the chalk lines marked on grass fields. Even before the game begins, the teams and the permissible outcomes have all been predetermined, and the player who pauses to ponder on possible relationships with his fellow man will quickly be embarrassed by a ball that slips between his legs or a fullback who knocks him down.

But as the forces of modernity eat



Left to right: Mickey Mantle, Dennis Homan, Ken Stabler, Coach Bear Bryant before the 1968 Cotton Bowl Game. (Photo: University of Alabama)

Bryce Christensen is editor of The Family in America.

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away at the forms of ethics, philosophy, and worship, millions cling ever tighter to the artifice of sports, lest they fall into Chaos. Many fans would probably "cut the game," if not for a nagging fear that life beyond the playing field is pointless. At night the ball park is brightly lit and comprehensible, while the world beyond lies submerged in darkness and confusion.

Inevitably, Americans begin to regard sports figures not as the likable entertainers that many of them are, but as superhuman heroes, gods almost. In the contrast between two recent biographies of outstanding American athletes, Kenny Stabler and Mickey Mantle, we see the sorry but predictable decline in character of the idols. Mickey Mantle captured the limelight as a slugging outfielder for the New York Yankees in the 1950's and 60's; Stabler won his glory as a southpaw quarterback for the Oakland Raiders during the 1970's. In different ways, both epitomized their respective eras: a decent family man playing a civilized game—Mantle belonged to the Age of Eisenhower—and a reckless playboy starring in a brutal sport, as Stabler enthralled the Me Generation.

Afflicted with osteomyelitis, Mantle played—in pain—even when he had to be taped from toe to waist. Stabler's biggest athletic handicap may have been his own high living: He partied all night even before big games. Mantle does apologize in print for drinking too much and neglecting his wife. But (at least to judge from his book) he was never unfaithful, and he made his marriage work. Stabler boasts of his marathon drinking and of his numerous sexual conquests. He laughs off his repeated marital failures.

There are, however, significant continuities which tie the two books together. Mickey Mantle was one of the heroes held up to Stabler by his Pony League coach in Foley, Alabama, and Stabler actually met Mantle at the 1968 Cotton Bowl. A star in both baseball and football, Stabler received an offer to join the Yankees while Mantle was still with the club, but declined, thinking he'd "make more money in the long run pitching pigskin instead of horsehide."

Both men express unusually strong feelings towards their fathers, men who proved their rugged masculinity off the playing field: Mantle's as a lead miner, Stabler's as a hunter, fisherman, and auto mechanic. Both men deeply admire competitors and teammates, but neither tries to hide his own ego when talking about past athletic feats. In their eagerness to establish their respective places in the athletic pantheon, both slip into the narrow mindset of a scorekeeper. When not swapping statistics, both men liked to pull pranks and carouse with the boys, though Stabler's pranks often became brawls and his carousing was obsessive and licentious.

Neither man ever completed a college degree nor felt the need for one; in fact, Stabler did play football for four years at the University of Alabama. Neither man seems to have acquired a perspective on his own status as a popular entertainer pursuing contrived goals, nor does either appear to have ever wondered about the kind of society which lavishes so much attention on ordinary men blessed with strong arms and quick reflexes.

Mantle's moral decency, though laudable, appears perhaps more a matter of prevalent social conventions than of personal conviction, and such decency is not held in place by the rules of baseball. Never catechized in any gospel except baseball, basketball, and football, nor ever taught about any higher gods than Mantle and the legendary "Bear" Bryant, Stabler reached the only logical conclusion: If there is

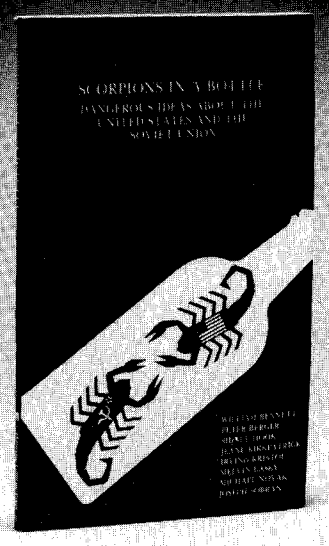
Mistletoe

by Diana Shaw

Green trees in the bare,
Flourishing in the briars;
Verb. sap. to Despair;
Itinerant, preaching friars,

Circled round a copse
Of baring winter trees;
Requiem for the corpse,
Daring winter freeze.

SCORPIONS IN A BOTTLE



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no referee, all things are permissible. Stabler (aptly nicknamed "The Snake") explains his outlook on life in simple terms: "Getting nowhere fast, that was my off-season philosophy. I figured it wasn't where you were going that counted because we all end up in the same place anyway. What really counts is *how* you get there. Was the trip fun?" Mantle, on his part, never endorses this kind of kinetic nihilism, but neither does he offer a plausible alternative. Once a rich and weighty word meaning "declaration of religious faith," *profession* has reached an absurd trivialization when applied to the pursuits of "pros" like these.

A.P. Housman counted fortunate "the athlete dying young," the young champion forced "to slip betimes away / From fields where glory does not stay." In contrast, Housman pointed to the many long-lived athletes who

> . . . swell the rout
> Of lads that wore their honors out,
> Runners whom renown outran
> And the name died before the man.

Housman wrote some years before baseball and football became multi-billion-dollar industries, offering countless media, management, business, and coaching opportunities to aging superstars. Both Stabler and Mantle have continued to find numerous ways—including these best-selling books—to turn their past athletic accomplishments into lucrative opportunities. But Mantle is not so busy making money that he does not find time to criticize commentators who forget how many post-season home runs *he* hit during his career, nor has Stabler quite forgotten his grudge against sportswriters who passed *him* over in picking the best NFL quarterback in 1977.

Speaking of writers, Stabler and Mantle are every bit as good at writing as Housman was at sports.

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Prurient Puritans

by Thomas Molnar

The Puritan Conscience and Modern Sexuality **by Edmund Leites, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.**

Masters and Johnson on Sex and Human Loving **by William H. Masters, Virginia E. Johnson, and Robert C. Kolodny, Boston: Little, Brown; $24.95.**

These apparently very different books—a cultural history and research on American sexual mores—actually address the same issue: the attempt to reconcile morality and the sexual impulse. A typically puritanical endeavor, because the puritan, with his eternal bad conscience about things that may not please God, that is sin, goes through mental, moral, and behavioral contortion in order to legitimize what he likes to do in bed. As Edmund Leites admits, the Catholic attitude is different: The Catholic Church foresees and expects moral failures in all men and provides the sinner, ex post facto, with assurances of a safe return. These are called sacraments of penance, and while their efficacy is by no means automatic (genuine contrition is needed), their availability offers confidence in God's forgiveness.

The puritan needs other guarantees, namely a moral life with no slippery occasions, for fear of falling into the abyss. Every daily act (family, business, foreign policy) must thus be moral, a tension impossible to sustain for anyone who is not an Oriental guru. Gandhi, for example, tested his own moral muscle by sleeping with a young girl in his bed—and not touching her. While the puritan does not go to such lengths, he devises other safeguards. In Leites' words, the combination of erotic delight and moral constancy is best located in marriage. However, at the end of the Puritan era in England, the Restoration comedy said out loud what males thought of this formula: When the initial passion ebbs away, the husband looks for other outlets, outside marriage. Yet the demand for constancy persisted and engendered complicated forms of sexual hypocrisy that Leites analyzes at length in Richardson's novel, *Pamela*. And that is when Dr. Freud came in. . . .

In *Sex and Human Loving* we have a kind of caricature of the puritan attitude to sex and sin. We are now in 1986, not in the centuries of English and American divines, of Cromwell and Richardson. In other words, constancy with its moral roots is no longer fashionable, new substitutes had to be found for both terms of the formula, sexual *and* moral fulfillment. The puritanical mind has come up with a number of substitutes, but first of all it replaced the pastor's sermon and the moralist's treatise with scientific sexology, sex therapy, psychoanalysis—and statistics. The overall method, as it is the case with reductionism in general, removes the topic itself and puts its trust in the process of sampling, of counting noses, or rather orgasms. It does not occur to the authors—inverted puritans that they are—that by ignoring the awe and excitement surrounding sexuality and by focusing on the physical and immediately psychological mechanism of the thing, the object of research slips away and we are left with mere behavioristic accounts. At best with the voyeur's and the lecher's temptation.

But even so, the puritan's approach needs guarantees that sex is not sinful, that it is natural, social, tension-relieving, scientific, teachable, and capsulizable within *how to* manuals. God is, of course, no longer present, and sin too has been absorbed by the blotter of the new culture. Yet, the puritan's sense of guilt is irrepressible, no matter what the label; it may be explained, compressed, socially justified, or diluted in some ideological message and in sexual hygiene, but something remains that needs taming and reassuring. Hence the proliferation of books about sex, the way catechisms used to proliferate or the "mir-

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rors" of princes and courtiers.

The upshot of this universal discussion of sex is devastating. It is enough indeed to read the chapter heads in *Sex and Human Loving*—"Gender Role," "Intimacy and Communication Skills," or "The Future of Sexuality"—to eliminate all enjoyment from sex. (Let's continue bearing in mind that the puritan purpose *is* to avoid sin, even at the price of, especially at the price of, experiencing pleasure.) But the (bitter) laugh comes really with the 16 practical recommendations (pp. 452-461) designed to render any virile male impotent: "Always remember that good sex begins while your clothes are still on"; "Take time to think about yourself as a sexual being"; "Fantasy is one of the best aphrodisiacs you can find"; "Keep some romance in your life"; and after all this refrigeration of sex in the name of sexology, this gem: "Don't make sex too serious."

But the whole book is so damn serious that one can only pity its victims, the eager young—and old—couples who read it. Instead of studying the text, they may of course concentrate on the illustrations of sexual techniques, repulsive in their "scientific" explicitness, but perhaps causing arousal. That must have been the publisher's idea, in view of increased sales.

Thomas Molnar is visiting professor of religious studies at Yale University.

Babbitt in the Eighties

by Stephen Tanner

***Irving Babbitt in Our Times*, edited by George A. Panichas and Claes G. Ryn, Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press; $27.95.**

Six of this book's 10 essays were presented at a conference commemorating the 50th anniversary of Irving Babbitt's death. Held in Washington, DC, at The Catholic University of America in November 1983, the conference brought together scholars of various disciplines to address the general subject of "Irving Babbitt: Fifty Years Later." Although some people might assume that Babbitt has nothing to do with our time—that he was simply one of those moralizing classicists from whom liberal minds liberated themselves during the first decades of this century—the essays of this book demonstrate that he deserves much more than antiquarian interest. In fact, the primary impression is that his ideas remain relevant and that his views on modern life have a prophetic quality that only now can be fully appreciated.

Babbitt's enduring influence and current relevance are Russell Kirk's subject in the opening essay. Admitting that Babbitt has influenced him "more strongly than has any other writer of the twentieth century," Kirk notes aspects of lasting value in Babbitt's thoughts. The subject of this brief essay, incidentally, he elaborates at considerably greater length in his excellent introduction to Babbitt's *Literature and the American College*.

In the essays that follow, George Panichas treats "Babbitt and Religion," arguing that, "For the most part, Babbitt has been denied full recognition as a religious man, as a man of spiritual insight." Claes Ryn, in "Babbitt and the Problem of Reality," identifies will and imagination as key concepts. Their interaction, as Babbitt understands it, coupled with certain ideas from Croce, yields a significant new theory of knowledge and displays Babbitt's considerable stature as a philosopher. The inspiration for bringing Croce to bear on Babbitt came to Ryn from one of his mentors, the late Folke Leander, whose essay "Irving Babbitt and Benedetto Croce," originally published in Sweden in 1954, is reprinted in this collection to make it available to a wider audience.

Joseph Baldacchino treats "Babbitt and the Question Ideology," arguing that although Babbitt resisted ideology viewed as rationalistic systematizing, a nonrationalistic and intuitively systematic world view is implicit in his writings and can be seen as a positive sort of ideology. Peter J. Stanlis examines the views of Babbitt, Burke, and Rousseau on the moral nature of man. David Hoeveler examines "Babbitt and Contemporary Conservative Thought in America," focusing on Irving Kristol, Michael Novak, and George Will. And, finally, Richard B. Hovey considers the current relevance of Babbitt's 1908 critique of higher education, *Literature and the American College*.

This collection of essays is worthy of its subject and in itself demonstrates the quality of Babbitt's continuing influence, and it is a central document in a revival of interest in Babbitt during the 80's.

Stephen Tanner is professor of English at Brigham Young University.

Catholic Church USA

by Joseph Schwartz

***The American Catholic Experience: A History from Colonial Times to the Present* by Jay P. Dolan, New York: Doubleday; $19.95.**

Three histories of the Catholic Church in the United States have become available within a two-year period—books by James Hennesey, S.J., Martin Marty, and now Jay P. Dolan, the bitterest of the three. More remarkable than the mere number are the significant likenesses. Are they the result of the *zeitgeist* or an attempt to shape it? The specter of an American Catholic Church hangs over them; pluralism is the new god. Social issues and democratic polity are given a central place in the life of religion. In reading such revisionist studies of the past, George Orwell's maxim comes to mind: "Who controls the past controls the future."

For Dolan the turning point in the history of Catholicism in the United States was the Second Vatican Council. In its documents he finds a justification for Catholic pluralism. In his belief that the Council sanctioned the right to dissent, he asserts, "There are various ways of being Catholic and people are choosing the style that best suits them."

The American heroes of the 18th and 19th centuries are those who wanted a "national American Church," those who wanted to step boldly into the future and "fashion a church in tune with the republican spirit of a new nation."

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A good deal of selectivity must be employed to build Dolan's unattested thesis that there have always been two equally important schools of thought regarding Catholicism in America: Enlightened Catholics wanted the pluralism that came with a national church in tune with the American way of life; the benighted "Europeanists" were the opposition. Those with prophetic foresight wanted a congregational model for the church, but they were defeated by a hierarchical-clerical church. The lay people "were left to pay, pray, and obey." On the key issue of authority, in Dolan's view, the right side lost, and the consequences proved to be devastating. Catholics were "taught to be docile and submissive." The Catholic view of sin made guilt central and created "a culture of sin." Ritual identified with the "feminine personality" became emotional and sentimental. Sisters were "the Catholic serfs." The miraculous was reduced to folklore, magic, and charms. This church was dominated by the pastor who "ruled as lord and master of his parish," while the "boss rule" of bishops became "the accepted norm." This is caricature as history—political cartoons submitted as serious commentary.

The question comes to this: Is Dolan a historian or a politician? Wherein lies the central weight of his book? Clearly, I think, on the side of politics and the rhetoric of advocacy. One need only examine how he uses words like "new" and "old" and their variations. The ways of the *past* will no longer work. A *new* spirit is alive in American Catholicism, the spirit of the next century. The progressive heterodox have seized the future; they are the *new*. The traditional orthodox have buried themselves in the past; they are the *old*. Pope John Paul II is "calling Catholics back to the *old* church, and trying to restore uniformity and control. But it [will] no longer work." Rhetorically, "new" is the operative word throughout the entire work.

For a historian, such a sensibility is a disaster. Such a mind has failed to obtain, by the necessarily arduous labor, the matter and significance of tradition. Such a sensibility is markedly deficient in the historical sense which, according to T.S. Eliot, "involves not only a perception of the pastness of the past, but of its presence." Respect for the past compels such a man to write not only "with his own generation in his bones" but also

REVISIONS

Unmythical Monster

Some time in the last century, artists decided they were heroes. Homer and the troubadours rested content with celebrating the exploits of great men; their own activities were not a suitable subject for great literature. Some heroes, of course, were also poets—Richard I of England, James I of Scotland, and Sir Philip Sidney—but that is a different matter. Whether Byron or Wordsworth or Goethe was the first poet-hero is of little importance (although, ironically, Samuel Johnson may be the first English writer whose life is as important as his works). The fact is that for over 100 years, writers—first poets, then novelists—managed to pass themselves off as cultural heroes.

In America, the heyday of the heroic novelist was the 1930's. Hemingway's toughness, Fitzgerald's alcoholism, Sinclair Lewis' nastiness were all the stuff of legends. In each case (and one might throw in Eugene O'Neill, Dylan Thomas, Brendan Behan, and Robert Lowell) the legend swallowed up the artist, the myth devoured the man. Whether Thomas Wolfe was ever an artist or even a man is open to question, but his personal story, told *ad nauseam* in his novels, practically defines the "artist as doomed hero" genre. In his superb new biography, *Look Homeward: A Life of Thomas Wolfe* (Boston: Little, Brown; $24.95), historian David Herbert Donald has succeeded in doing something Thomas Wolfe never achieved: making sense of Wolfe's life.

The facts are familiar to most novel-readers, of the wild mountain boy (actually from urban Asheville), the semiliterate Gothic Southerner (of Pennsylvania German blood with an education at Chapel Hill and Harvard that made him, perhaps, the most learned successful novelist of his time) whose gargantuan appetites led him on from one excess to another until he died, a casualty of his lust for life (pathetically shy, Wolfe relied on prostitutes and older women until his celebrity attracted a stream of unbalanced young women. He died of tuberculosis). Donald is more sympathetic to Wolfe's irresponsibility and pretensions to genius than the author deserves, but there is something attractive in a novelist who did not know how to play the literary version of "Careers." He was what he was, he wrote what he wrote (with considerable assistance from editors).

Because he did not know how to lie, much less conceal his provincial prejudices, critics accused Wolfe of fascism, anti-Semitism, and—worst of all—ignorance of Marx. The Southern Agrarians made an effort to like him, but most of them were too infected with critical theories ever to appreciate the lumbering poetry and squalid magnificence of Wolfe even at his best. Robert Penn Warren wrote a withering review of *Look Homeward Angel* but left Wolfe alone after the two met in Colorado. David Donald realized that Wolfe entertained "a certain hatred and loathing for the South, perhaps all the more because he recognizes it as part of himself."

This is Donald's first literary biography, and with it he goes to the head of the class. Whatever flaws *Look Homeward* has—a certain ethical indifference to Wolfe's sometimes inexcusable behavior and a questionable use of fiction as a guide to real events—it will stand for decades as an exemplary work on an (unfortunately) exemplary figure in American letters. (TF)

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with a feeling for the whole. What has been, is, and will be "has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order." Further, and perhaps most important, the historical sense is the perception of "the timeless and of the temporal together." Without this sensibility, how could we dare to confront history? Only, I suggest, in a spirit of willful ignorance. The past does not bury its dead. They are a lively presence among us with the right to be fully engaged in our discourse. To patronize their living in the living they did is to profane memory.

Joseph Schwartz is professor of English at Marquette University.

Prairie Dog

by Jane Greer

Prairie Women: Images in American and Canadian Fiction **by Carol Fairbanks, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press; $19.95.**

Fairbanks has an interesting hypothesis: that early prairie women loved the plains and their adventurous lives here as much as pioneer men did. I have never believed in the myth that every pioneer woman was long-suffering, silently hating the prairie and the man who brought her here. I was pleased to think that I'd found here some justification for my belief. Unfortunately, Fairbanks' book reads like the dissertation that spawned it. It might make a good reference text for a women's literature class, but as for *being* literature . . . One of Fairbanks' problems is overkill: Her idea would make a decent article, but in a 300-page hardcover book she smothers the subject.

In her introduction, the author writes, "The present study is committed to this act of revisioning the lives of prairie women in Canada and the United States—looking back, seeing with new eyes, and entering old texts from a feminist critical perspective. I hope to discover new ways women writers have described the experiences of pioneer prairie women and how they have named the 'new' land—the land that was new to the pioneers but old and familiar to native peoples."

Try to overlook the coyness of the second sentence (the introduction was obviously written *after* the rest of the book). Disregard the question of why we should *care* how prairie women "named" their land and the scarcely revolutionary information that the land was new to pioneers but old to the Indians. Try to ignore Fairbanks' literary sloth: "revisioning," a ridiculous substitute for "reassessing," and the lethargic "looking back, seeing with new eyes." Try to forget all this, because it *is* just one paragraph, and many of her others are better. Concentrate instead on the real meat of the passage, where Fairbanks is candid about her motivation for all this: She has a "feminist critical perspective." She may or may not love literature and the prairie, but they both get bulldozed aside in her political zeal to build up a dry pile of evidence.

This, then, is the most disappointing thing about *Prairie Women*: that its title is accurate. Far from inviting us to discover some obscure but talented writers, or to think of the prairie more kindly, the author combines fragments of original writing with truckloads of her own somnolent prose to prove her point: that pioneer women were tough and loved it here. Why did this dissertation need to become a book?

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Letter to Another Editor

by Arnold Beichman

"More and more, the categories we think by are forms of darkness. Yet we keep using them as if fearful of the deeper darkness we'd inhabit if we had to front this life without them."

—Jack Beatty, "The Category Crisis," *Atlantic* (March 1986)

An open letter to Jack Beatty, Editor, *Atlantic Monthly*

Dear Jack:

I hope you will overlook this example of what the French call *l'esprit de l'escalier*. I should have thought of your little essay "The Category Crisis" when you said laughingly, but not amusingly after a few moments' conversation at the Newport party, "Oh, you're a professional anti-Communist." I was surprised at your remark. After all, you were putting me into a category not in a sociological but rather a judgmental spirit. I muttered something about your being a professional anti-anti-Communist; we went off and talked about something else.

When I came home, I went back to your article (I admire some of your things and file them under the category "Beatty," even though it may not be as significant a category as "anti-anti-Communist"), and I began to categorize my thoughts:

1. I began to think back and wonder why you used that particular phrase: professional anti-Communist. You might have said, "Oh, you're an anti-Communist." But you couldn't. If you had, I would have said, "Well, aren't you?" Now that might have been awkward for you to answer. Nobody in his right democratic mind can today be a pro-Communist (unless he calls himself a Marxist, which in some leftist circles is regarded as a code word for being a Communist) or a neutralist, unless you're a symmetrist, which is difficult—you know, Sakharov, Solidarity, Stalin, Afghanistan, the lot. But to admit you are an anti-Communist would put you into my category, which wouldn't do at all.

2. I don't imagine we've seen each other more than three or four times since we first met back in the mid-1970's. Now, since we have only seen each other a few times in a decade, how would you know I was a professional anti-Communist, not just a plain, *non*professional anti-Communist?

3. Does the term "professional" refer to expert knowledge about what, say, Bukharin said to Trotsky or Stalin in 1921 about Kronstadt or about Lenin's first words at the Finland station? In other words, is a Sovietologist like Adam Ulam or Richard Pipes a professional anti-Communist, because each draws terrifying conclusions from his reading?

4. Is it possible that the adjective "professional" is in truth a put-down? It could imply that I make a living by exposing, explicating Communist chicanery. But suppose the things I wrote about Communism or the USSR were poorly paid for, and I made a good living on the Chicago options market or going short on IBM at the right time. Would I then be not a professional anti-Communist but an amateur anti-Communist? Or, perhaps, because of my writings I am rewarded with a good deal of prestige among professional anti-Communists (without necessarily being one), which might be glory enough?

5. Just what is the border line between anti-Communism and *professional* anti-Communism? Is Reagan a professional anti-Communist, or don't Presidents or statesmen like Kissinger or Shultz count? What is the essential difference between an anti-Communist and a professional anti-Communist? Do you go from one category to the other by some criterion? Is William Buckley a professional anti-Communist or is he an editor-novelist whose themes deal critically with totalitarianism?

6. Does the expletive apply to, say, Soviet émigrés like Dmitri Simes, Solzhenitsyn, and Ladislav Bittman, who make a great deal of money writing about the USSR—much of which is hostile—or does the expletive apply only to Westerners? In other words, a victim of the Bolshevik system who escapes has the right to be a professional anti-Communist but not, say, Norman Podhoretz, whose parents only escaped the Czarist system. (I suppose one could have called the prerevolutionary Lenin a "professional anti-Czarist." He certainly made his calling a profession, according to his *What Is to Be Done?*)

7. Is there a category like a "professional anti-Fascist"? Or a "professional anti-apartheidist"? There are a good many people today who are making a pretty good living on the apartheid issue, and yet they are curiously reticent, when it comes to the suppression of civil freedoms in the Soviet Union. In other words, does the word "professional" only go with anti-Communist? Could you be a professional anti-anti-Communist, for example? If that category could be clearly defined, there would be plenty of candidates.

8. Supposing I got into a debate with Michael Parenti or some other Institute for Policy Studies Sovietophile, or with Howard Zinn, and I called them "professional Marxists," would that have any relevance to our

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debate? Could I be called a "professional anti-Marxist"? Is Kenneth Minogue, in light of his book *Alien Powers: The Pure Theory of Ideology* a professional anti-Communist or a professional anti-Marxist? Or both?

9. Is the expletive "professional anti-Communist" intended to weaken any opinion of mine critical of the USSR, however informed, logical, or thoughtful it might be? After all, you didn't intend the use of the word "professional" as a compliment. Therefore, whatever I might say about the USSR need not be given credence since what I am saying is only what is to be expected from a professional anti-Communist. But, then, isn't your response to be expected from a professional anti-anti-Communist?

10. Is the phrase "professional anti-Communist" intended as a political category, or is it really a category which grows out of the left-liberal culture fathered so successfully by Jean-Paul Sartre? The phrase "anti-anti-Communist intellectual" is certainly a category in culture, although those so denominated (by professional anti-Communists?) are usually involved in politics, too.

11. Anyway, what's wrong with being a professional anti-Communist? If that category includes as role model Joe McCarthy, then we have the old problem—an example, a "for instance" is not a definition.

Are you sure you mean, as you wrote in the *Atlantic*: "Better that the world be wrongly intelligible than not intelligible at all"? That statement, I would say, clearly leads to concentration camps and even death camps. I agree with Bertrand Russell: "It is better to be clearly wrong than vaguely right." As you can see, you've set the gray cells churning, and I hope this letter will start yours churning, too.

Sincerely,

Arnold Beichman,
Research Fellow

P.S. As I was rereading the letter, I wondered why, in the 30's, one never heard the phrase "oh, he's a professional anti-Nazi." The phrase wouldn't have made any sense. If a were getting a salary, *tant mieux*. Somehow, the word "professional" has become a limpet adjective in liberal culture, attachable only to "anti-Communism" but never to other intellectual politics. Imagine a putdown of Ralph Nader as "a professional consumerist." Such a phrase might even be regarded as a compliment. It's like the cant phrase "Red-baiting." (I have also been called "a professional Red-baiter.") Fascist-baiting, Pretoria-baiting, Pinochet-baiting—nonsensical phrases. The word "professional" can be very flattering when it is used without a noun—as in, "he's a real pro," "he is every inch a professional," in reference to a doctor or a lawyer. There's nothing necessarily derogatory about calling someone a professional politician. Yet you and I know that to call someone a professional anti-Communist would hardly be regarded as a desirable encomium. How is it possible that a "halo word," in Harold Lasswell's phrase, like "professional" becomes a "boo-word" when it prefixes the category "anti-Communist"?

Letter From the Heartland

by Jane Greer

Gay Violence

It was Homecoming 1986 at Jamestown College in southeastern North Dakota. Scott Westcott, 19, was at the dance. So was Shaun Erickson, 28, a senior who lectures and writes widely about his homosexuality.

The room was crowded, and, according to Westcott, his eyes kept meeting Erickson's across it. Young Westcott didn't like that one bit. When Erickson tried to make his way through the crowd and "touched" Westcott on the shoulder in passing, Westcott ordered him to leave the dance and hit him in the face three times. Then he followed Erickson across the room and gave him one for the road. Erickson, who suffered facial bruises, didn't put up a fight, but he did file charges.

At the trial before a Jamestown municipal judge, Westcott's lawyer said

BOOKS IN BRIEF

A Study in Thinking **by Jerome S. Bruner, Jacqueline Goodnow, and George A. Austin, New Brunswick: Transaction Books; $19.95;and *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds* by Jerome Bruner, Cambridge: Harvard University Press; $15.00.** Jerome Bruner is a pioneering force in cognitive psychology, and these two books—the first a reprint of the 1956 classic—make it possible to appreciate the scope of his contribution. In his latest book, Bruner points out that cognitive science has concentrated too much on the easy part of cognition, logic, and problem solving, at the expense of the creative imagination. He draws particular attention to the role of storytelling even in supposedly scientific disciplines like economics. In a highly literate afterword, Bruner takes up literary interpretation in its various (equally repellent) forms. If, as Bruner insists, the function of art is "to open us to dilemmas, to the hypothetical, to the range of possible worlds that a text can refer to," then the real enemies are not deconstructionism or Marxism *per se* but the boredom-inducing egalitarianism produced by empty ideas. A remarkably good book and a "must read" for aspiring critics.

Religion, Economics, and Social Thought, **edited by Walter Block and Irving Hexhan: The Fraser Institute.** Conference proceedings rarely make for lively reading, but the variety of participants in this international symposium makes for more than a few lively exchanges. In many ways the most interesting contribution is John Yoder's radical rejection of "the proclaimed beneficent intentions and systematic wisdom of our latest Constantines on both the Right and the Left." Participants include Martin Marty, Michael Novak, Stephen Tonsor, Arthur Shenfield, and Richard Neuhaus.

Why We Lost the ERA **by Jane J. Mansbridge, Chicago: University of Chicago Press; $9.95.** The author of *Beyond Adversary Democracy* demonstrates again that a radical and a feminist is capable of writing solid books. Mansbridge's critical and lucid discussion of the ERA has been applauded by both sides—evidence of a remarkable accomplishment.

Unions in Transition: Entering the Second Century, **edited by Seymour Martin Lipset, San Francisco: Institute for Contemporary Studies; $29.95.** Lipset is one of the best political sociologists in the U.S., and this intelligently edited volume frankly confronts the unions' problems in a series of readable articles written from a variety of perspectives. A book that should be read seriously by every businessman with a union contract.

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his client was merely defending himself against what he perceived, rightly or wrongly, as a sexual advance. After all, Erickson was a grown man whose proclivities were well-known; Westcott was just an innocent, frightened young boy, and state law does permit the use of force in defending against sexual contact.

Erickson denied that he had gazed at Westcott and brought in a female friend to corroborate that testimony. He said that if he had in fact "touched" Westcott's shoulder, it was inadvertent.

The city judge charged that Westcott showed "a gross deviation from acceptable conduct" when he molested Erickson's face, and found him guilty of simple assault. Shaun Erickson was pleased: "There's a lot of gay violence in this country and it's getting worse, especially since the problem with AIDS. People need to learn more about AIDS and be a little more understanding." It's not known whether Scott Westcott was worried about catching AIDS from Erickson or simply didn't want to be the butt of any jokes.

Before the altercation, Erickson testified, he had often been abused verbally. "I hope now they'll just leave me alone," he said after the decision, indicating that he had no plans to curtail any of his activities, literary, oratorical, or otherwise.

Scott Westcott appealed the case to county court, where, to almost everyone's surprise, a jury recently reversed the municipal judge's decision and found him not guilty of assaulting Erickson. The headline read, "Jurors: It's OK To Beat Up Gay." Shaun Erickson is upset, in no small part because the ruling cannot be appealed.

Jane Greer edits Plains Poetry Journal *and owns 20 hours of Cary Grant movies.*

Letter From the Southwest

by Odie Faulk

***Academe, n.** An Ancient school where morality and philosophy were taught.*

***Academy, n.** (from academe). A modern school where football is taught.*

—Ambrose Bierce,
The Devil's Dictionary (1906)

In the spring a young man's fancy turns lightly to thoughts of love. What happens in the rest of the year is uncertain, but in the southwestern part of the United States that young man's fancy, in the first chill of autumn, turns to thoughts of football. By October this year, the madness so gripped the region that tickets to the annual clash between Texas and Oklahoma in the Cotton Bowl were being scalped for $200 for end-zone seats and $800 for seats on the 50-yard line—this despite widespread recognition that the University of Texas' team was going to take a severe drubbing.

This mania is not confined to college sports. Boys at the tender age of eight and nine are encouraged by their fellows and their fathers to join in organized athletics. No youngster escapes the pressure. In the summer there is recreational league competition, and in the fall they can represent their elementary school in interscholastic games. Recent elementary schoolboys have been deliberately repeating the fifth or sixth grade to increase their chances of making a team in junior and senior high.

Fat, unathletic boys are made to feel they are second-class citizens—failures for life even before they reach puberty—if they do not make a team. Second-rate athletes virtually kill themselves trying to excel, while the natural talents or those who develop mediocre talents through long hours of hard work become kings in their society.

And it is drilled into them from the days of peewee football that the only true glory is in victory. Oft-quoted to them is the wisdom of that great coach who said that winning may not be everything, but it certainly beats anything connected with coming in second.

Twenty-five years ago the Associated Press' sportswriter for the Southwest Conference wrote a book about high school football in Texas, *Autumn's Mightiest Legions*. In the small-town Southwest, Friday nights are reserved for watching the local team battle it out with the gladiators from some neighboring city. The spectators get so overwrought that fights—and even killings—have been known to occur.

After the game, participants and spectators relive the spectacle from late Friday night until Tuesday of the next week. There is not a man—or woman—who cannot Monday-Morning-Quarterback the team to a better performance. Then from Tuesday to Friday afternoon the coming game serves as a topic of conversation. The ability to discuss local football prospects intelligently is instant cachet in male socie-

BOOKS IN BRIEF

***Window on the Future: The Pro-Life Year in Review, 1986*, edited by Dave Andrusko, with an introduction by Ronald Reagan, Washington, DC: The National Right to Life Committee; $2.95.** A heartening summary of the efforts in 1986 of those seeking to stop the slaughter of the unborn. The evil wrought by seven old men in *Roe* v. *Wade* still means death for over a million unborn children annually, but grass-roots antiabortion forces continue to gain strength and political clout.

***Secret Trauma: Incest in the Lives of Girls and Women* by Diana E.H. Russell, New York: Basic Books; $24.95.** The feminist author of *Rape in Marriage* continues her indictment of the male sex with a misleading study of "incestuous abuse," which blurs the boundary between actual incest (*very* rare) and other types of questionable sexual behavior between relatives (appreciably more common, especially between nieces and uncles). The only reliable conclusion is Russell's finding that sex abuse of children is far more common among stepfathers than among biological fathers. So where does casual divorce and remarriage leave young girls?

***The Moral Life of Children* and *The Political Life of Children* by Robert Coles, Boston: Atlantic Monthly; $19.95 each volume.** Engaging analyses by a leading child psychologist of the emerging political and ethical views that children around the world express in their drawings and conversations. Particularly interesting is Dr. Cole's reports on the indoctrination of Nicaraguan children and the moral stoicism of young Brazilians.

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ty. Inability to talk about football raises questions of sexual preference.

If football intensely matters at the local level, the stakes are infinitely higher at the university. Everyone in the Southwest is expected to have a favorite college team. In Oklahoma it is taken for granted that you will support either the University of Oklahoma or else its cross-state rival, Oklahoma State. Most Sooners choose OU because it wins consistently. In Texas the situation is confused, because there are seven institutions with pretensions to big-time football.

This public attitude creates an extraordinary amount of public pressure on regional university coaches to produce winning teams. While alumni and friends of the institution are using their considerable influence to demand a bowl-bound team, the athletes add their clamor. They have seen professional football make instant millionaires of draftees who have completed four years of college eligibility (notice I did not say "after graduation"). Much-recruited high school football players, known in the parlance of coaching as "blue-chippers," refuse to go to a college if its teams do not win enough to appear often on national television—losers do not attract scouts from the NFL.

Businessmen in college towns join in demanding the head of a losing coach: winning teams attract big crowds. It takes victory after victory week after week to fill stadiums that seat 75,000 and more—fans who spend at motels and restaurants, who buy gasoline and souvenirs.

Legislators likewise add to the pressure, for they have a way of being more generous to a university with a winning team than to less fortunate schools. Moreover, old grads are more openhanded to the alma mater when it is ranked in the top 20 teams in the nation. According to a recent estimate, one university football team —in one winning season—brought in $7 million. Even absentminded professors of philosophy seem to have deduced that it is more to their economic benefit for the local warriors to win on the gridiron than to lose. Those same professors find that they are treated with greater respect at academic conferences and conventions if their university is nationally ranked. There is constant faculty pressure on the coach to win.

For the coach who does make it to the top in the university world, that is, who becomes head coach in a major football conference, the pressure is unrelenting. He must win big in order to recruit big, and he must recruit big in order to win big. He must fly around the country signing blue-chip high school athletes, and he must spend large amounts of time in company with old grads who contribute the slush funds needed for such recruiting.

Unfortunately, this leaves the head coach little time for coaching. Therefore he must recruit and retain good assistants. One assistant coach works with the backfield, another for the offensive line, yet a third for the defensive line, another for kicking, another for the quarterback, and yet another for linebackers. Naturally an assistant coach on a winning team is soon recruited away to become head coach at some school aspiring to more victories, leaving his former boss with one more headache.

The end result of all this is that coaching today has become one of the hardest jobs in the world. University coaches are running minor league professional football, but they must do so in the world of academe—where many professors on the athletic council do not realize the direct connection between money invested and victory or defeat. Coaches too often are expected to produce a bowl-bound team on an athletic budget of only $2 or $3 million a year.

Moreover, coaches live in a cutthroat world where fans have an extremely short memory. I watched as one university coach was hanged in effigy by students and alumni when his team went only 7-4 for the season. For the three preceding years he had been in the hunt for the national title, which he won once. Seven victories and four losses—and no bowl bid —no longer was good enough for students and alumni. The coach had to go.

For the successful few, the rewards are great. Texas A&M recently gained national notoriety for paying its head coach a quarter of a million dollars a year. Others must make do on a salary of only $100,000 or so.

A·r·t·i·F·a·c·t·s

Contemporary Architecture Exhibit
1987 Wichita, Kansas (On Site)

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But salary is only part of it. Another source of income, sometimes even larger than salary, is what a winning coach receives from doing his own weekly television show during the season. Additional revenue comes from commercials or even a radio show. And there are paid appearances to speak to this gathering or that. One nationally prominent coach now receives $15,000 for a public speech. Moreover, a winning coach gets quiet tips about good investments, and he may be invited to sit on boards of directors, for which he will be well paid.

But for each good job, there are hundreds of coaches not doing so well. In fact, there are few top jobs in coaching. Oklahoma only has two or three and Texas five or six good jobs —but there are literally thousands of aspiring high school coaches in the region. The competition for one of the best jobs, when at last one comes open, is intense, especially when you consider that there are hundreds of out-of-state applicants.

For 40 years and more I have seen this spectacle unfold each autumn in the Southwest. I have watched with compassionate sorrow as elementary school youngsters of little talent are ostracized. I have observed with fascination as otherwise sane adults go berserk at high school games. And I have been at endless faculty gatherings where the entire world of athletics was treated with contempt.

Yet on an autumn afternoon, as cool winds blow from the north, turning leaves golden, please, Lord, let me have seats on the 50-yard line when they tee up the football for the Texas-Oklahoma game at the Cotton Bowl in Dallas.

Odie Faulk is author of Arizona: A Short History *(University of Oklahoma Press) and of other standard volumes of Southwestern history.*

REVISIONS

Boys Will Be Boys

Men are made, not born. That much seems clear from a host of studies on adolescence in different cultures. The American middle-class male has a hard enough time groping toward manhood in the institutionalized and sanitized environment of high school and college. It is hard to imagine what it must be like for children in urban slums. But, whatever our sympathies for the lower classes—blacks in particular—middle-class Americans are increasingly facing the fact that by and large such people *are* the crime problem. In the 60's we experimented with bribing the lower orders into acquiescence, through a variety of poverty programs and community empowerment programs. Few worked. One reason is suggested by *Communities and Crimes*, a remarkably solid volume edited by Albert J. Reiss Jr. and Michael Tonry (Chicago: University of Chicago Press; $27.50): Communities may be more than aggregates of individuals; in some cases they are the social context of criminal behavior.

Research on communities and crime is problematic, as Albert Reiss makes clear in an exhaustive introductory article, partly because of the ways in which government agencies collect their data: By aiming at a broad representative sample, the FBI obscures the complexity of local variations in crime patterns. Still, as Leo Schuerman and Solomon Kobrin point out, there is a life cycle for communities embarking on criminal careers: "Among the changes signalling neighborhood deterioration and rising crime rates were a shift from single- to multiple-family dwellings, a rise in residential mobility, unrelated individuals and broken families, the ratio of children to adults, minority group populations, females in the labor force."

Of all the variables, the one that leaps off the page is broken families. Robert J. Sampson, in a comprehensive and incisive article, suggests a direct relationship between marital disruption (i.e., divorce), and the rates of robbery and homicide. Whatever positive features divorce offers for whites, intact families serve as deterrents to crime not only within their own household but also upon the entire neighborhood: "In areas with a cohesive family structure, parents often take on responsibility for their own children and for other youth also." What is more, even the best single-parent household cannot make the same contribution to community control as an intact family, for the simple reason that only one parent, typically a working mother, is unable to supervise leisure activities.

If family dissolution and neighborhood disintegration are the problem, then some form of community empowerment ought to be part of the solution. However, Richard M. McGahey reveals that such programs typically run aground on the rock of politics: Local officials do not enjoy surrendering power to ordinary people and generally succeed in co-opting or subverting community action plans. Short of rebuilding a shattered community—a near-impossibility, it would seem—Sampson points to one method that does work: Police harassment/police "aggressiveness," e.g., frequent searches and interrogations of disorderly or otherwise suspicious persons, may "send a signal to potential offenders that one's chances of getting caught are higher than they actually are." Harassment seems to work particularly well in reducing the number of robberies committed by black adult males.

In the good old days of Chicago and New York, punks with strange hairdos, walking down the street with their "ghetto-blasters" raging, would have been taken into an alley and beaten by the first cop they encountered. If he knew the neighborhood, he would have also complained to their mothers and, perhaps, the local priest or minister. Now, it turns out, the uniformed gorillas were right all along. What a surprise.

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Letter From the Lower Right

by John Shelton Reed

Life in the Rust Belt

Last August marked the 50th anniversary of the first field trials of the Rust cotton picker, an occasion little noted outside the pages of *Forbes*, where I saw it. Somebody should have made a bigger deal about it. For better or for worse, that machine has transformed the South in my lifetime, and maybe yours, too.

Oh, sure, you don't want to give Mr. Rust (whoever he was) as much credit or blame as, say, Eli Whitney, whose invention got us into cotton monoculture in the first place. Southern agriculture might have diversified in any case, driving tenant farmers and sharecroppers off the land. And, in time, industrialization would probably have lured them off, with or without mechanized agriculture.

Besides, it's not obvious to some people I know that Mr. Rust did us any favors. Are we in the South better off now that only 5 percent of us are farmers than we would be if half of us were, like 50 years ago?

Well, there's no question that we're collectively better off in economic terms. Getting out of cotton agriculture has done good things for the South's per capita income: 50 years ago it was about the same as Venezuela's today. The good people of one Deep South town even put up a statue of a boll weevil, in gratitude for that bug's suggestion that they find some other way to make a living. A blessing in disguise, they felt.

But a lot of individual Southerners suffered to make the average Southerner better off. The collapse of cotton tenancy wasn't painless, and we shouldn't forget that. Moreover, my agrarian friends would say, Southerners of all people ought to recognize that man doesn't live by bread alone. Have we sold our cultural birthright for a mess of economic pottage?

Maybe so. But let me tell a story.

Last fall I was driving north from Sumter, South Carolina, headed back to Chapel Hill on a pretty two-lane highway. It was about 8:00 on a beautiful, crisp morning, with (believe it or not) Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony on the car radio. I was feeling good, soaking up the rural scenery, and watching for the notorious South Carolina speedtraps when, behold, I came upon a cotton field, to the right of the road, where the crop was being harvested. A solitary black man in a camouflage jacket and a cowboy hat was perched high above what I now assume to have been a Rust cotton picker. As I said, it was 8:00 in the morning, but he had already covered half of the field.

Was this sad? Did I miss the rank of cotton pickers, men, women, and children, inching their way across the field, dragging their long picking sacks? Did I miss their sweet singing, evidence of their vibrant folk culture? Did I regret the passing of the ordered, traditional society that guaranteed them their humble living?

Not a chance.

Anybody inclined to nostalgia on that score needs to read James Agee's *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* on cotton agriculture as experienced from the bottom. Better yet: pick some. I never picked cotton myself, but as a teenager I did work burley tobacco one summer for dinner and four dollars a day and—well, I'm still resting up from the experience.

Still, there is the question of what those folks are doing these days instead of picking cotton. Some of them, as you may have noticed, have left South Carolina to seek opportunity in the North, where some have found it, but many have not. The answer for others, though, was evident just across the road from that cotton field, on my left as I drove by: a one-story brick building with a sign identifying it as a factory producing bearings (I think it was). In the parking lot were a couple dozen cars, vans, and pickup trucks: Pontiac, Chevrolet, Dodge (not a Volvo in sight).

This is the kind of rural industrialization that has been coming—slowly, painfully slowly—to much of the South. It's not the sort of whiz-bang,

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high-tech, high-wage industry advanced thinkers get excited about. It's the kind of industry that finds low-wage, poorly educated, grateful-for-a-job, displaced cotton pickers attractive workers. It's also often the kind of industry so economically marginal that it needs tax breaks and subsidies of various sorts. It doesn't do much for our average industrial wage, or our image. Some say that we're basically competing with the Koreans, on equal terms, and that's uncomfortably close to the truth. But it beats picking cotton, and Mr. Rust's machine does that these days, anyhow.

As Hamilton Horton has pointed out (in his contribution to a symposium called *Why the South Will Survive*), though, because industry has come to us late, it offers some interesting, desirable features to offset its obvious shortcomings. Most of all, it doesn't uproot its workers. These factories don't have to be located in cities, near harbors or railheads; they form instead a sort of archipelago along the Interstate highway system. Their workers don't have to move to within streetcar distance either (recall those Toronados and Firebirds in the parking lot); they can stay in rural communities where they were raised, and they do.

Just down the road from my cotton field and bearing factory were two Baptist churches, almost within sight of one another. I presume that one was black and one white, but I couldn't have said which was which: Both were modest brick buildings of recent vintage; both stood on carefully maintained grounds; both had large gravel parking lots. Both were obviously very much in business.

Who goes to those churches? Well, not cotton pickers. There aren't any left in that county, as far as I could see. Some farmers, to be sure, and perhaps a few agricultural wage-laborers. (The machine operator I saw could have been either.) But most members of their congregations would probably fall in the category the census bureau calls "rural, nonfarm"—a quarter or more of the South's population, and a higher proportion here than elsewhere. These are folks who live in the countryside, generally own some land there, but work at blue-collar jobs in rural factories or commute to such jobs in the South's towns and small cities.

These are the children of yesterday's cotton pickers. A few years ago, when Howell Raines went to Alabama for the *New York Times Magazine* and tracked down some of the tenant children Agee wrote about, that's what he found: men and women living in mobile homes not far from where they grew up, working at jobs like welder, meat-packer, nursing-home attendant.

I know a couple who live about an hour from here, in an unfashionable direction. They're 10 miles from the nearest small town and close to 50 from the nearest cities. Both grew up on farms, but she's now a receptionist, and he's working as a mechanic while trying to get a job as a rural mail-carrier. Each commutes an hour to work (in opposite directions)—an hour there and an hour back. They're certainly not rich, or even well-off; I presume they're in debt up to their eyebrows. But they have a comfortable new double-wide on six acres with a garden, deer, and wild turkey. He's got a boat that I covet, two cars, and a four-wheel-drive truck. (A country boy can survive.)

They have relatives nearby and will soon have one even nearer: A son who just got out of the army is probably going to put *his* mobile home on their property. They seem to feel this arrangement beats apartment living, and I agree with them. They also believe their lives are better than they would have been 50 years ago; they work very hard, but I don't know anybody less nostalgic.

This new pattern of industrialization—one really made possible only by the automobile and decent roads—does have cultural consequences. In particular, it avoids the sort of "proletarianization" supposed to result from yanking people out of the villages and countryside and jamming them together in an urban working class. It allows for the possibility of blue-collar workers as individualistic and conservative as the farmers and peasants Marx had in mind when he groused about "the idiocy of rural life." Certainly, in much of the South it has produced factory and service workers who support their churches, clean their graveyards, tend their gardens, hunt and fish, and generally manifest that vibrant folk culture we were talking about.

Of course, it wouldn't do to romanticize this new pattern, any more than the old one. The South's rural, nonfarm population is more amiable and contributes more to social stability than an urban mob. But we're not talking here about a happy industrial peasantry, miraculously preserved from the acids of modernity. To judge from the number of satellite dishes, a good many spend a lot of time watching television. We can hope they're watching Pat Robertson. But it's probably the Playboy Channel.

John Shelton Reed lives in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, which has recently metastasized.

Letter From Albion

by Andrei Navrozov

Will It Play in Peoria?

Chronicles readers may remember that in my last letter I described the "Russian Style" exhibition in London as a Soviet propaganda *ballon d'essai*, flown to test Western media response to the new nationalism emanating from Moscow. It is by no means coincidental that such a test should be made here rather than in the United States: The more diverse and at the same time less localized British press offers Soviet propagandists a quicker, more complete picture of their successes and failures. In other words, the theater of Soviet propaganda uses London as a New Haven of old, opening shows here and taking them to New York once all the kinks in the production have been taken out. More preparations are now under way, and what follows is a kind of preview.

The richly illustrated catalogs of *Mezhdunarodnaya Kniga* (International Book) have just announced the publication of several timely titles. Let us ponder why, at this particular moment in history, Progress Publishers should bring out *Christian Ecumenism*, a treatise of some 300 pages proving that "theologians see the way out of the crisis of religion in unifying all Christians"—unless, of course, its editors suspect that "all Christians" are ready to be unified under Soviet rule.

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Perhaps even more significant is the companion *Religion and Social Conflict in the USA*, which "analyzes the ways of 'extinguishing' social conflict with the help of religion." Christians, pay attention.

Titles like *USSR Through Indian Eyes*, *Red Star and Green Crescent*, and *A Tree in the Centre of Kabul* tell another side of the same story: Russians love religion. "Socialism," runs the catalog blurb, "has turned the once-backward outlying regions of tsarist Russia into flourishing republics [like Kazakhstan?] that are now far in advance of certain neighbouring countries [like Afghanistan?] which were formerly comparable as regards traditions, religion, and way of life." Moslems, take note. Here is *USSR: A Genuine United Nations*. Indeed, why have the UN—are you listening, Ambassador Kirkpatrick?—if the *Soviet Frontiers of Tomorrow* promises to unite all nations in a world *Where Human Rights Are Real*?

But is the *USSR: A Dictatorship or a Democracy?* If you do not think the question rhetorical, you had better read *The Anatomy of Lies* and *Why We Returned to the Soviet Union*. For there is one religion which the Russians do not love as passionately as they do their beloved Russian Orthodox Christianity, dreamy Buddhism, or sweet Islam: Yes, the Jews are *Caught in the Act* again, as usual, and *Zionism Stands Accused* in the pages of *Wormwood*. The last book, according to the blurb,

> is about *Zionism* and *Zionists*. The Soviet writer exposes *Zionism* for what it really is—the shady sides of the *Zionist* "promised land," the reactionary substance of *Zionism*, the tragic fate of Soviet Jews caught in the *Zionist* web.

The italics are mine.

According to one of my father's axioms, all Soviet history must be interpreted in terms of political movement from the totalitarian "left" to the totalitarian "right." In other words, as it develops and matures, totalitarianism is bound to jettison the "left-wing" heritage of the Enlightenment and employ as its new ideological tool the "right-wing" heritage of anti-Western (and, of course, anti-Semitic) nationalism, in combination with Orthodox Christianity which it can well adapt for this use. Save for such interruptions as World War II, when Stalin's "communist" totalitarianism had to dissociate itself conspicuously from the "nationalist" totalitarianism of Hitler, and the post-1953 "liberalization"—when another such detour was occasioned by a prolonged power struggle—the trend toward the universal nationalist state of Stalin's dreams has continued to this day. Shortly before his death, Stalin was—according to rumor—exploring the possibilities of having himself crowned with the full participation of the Orthodox Church. This did not startle those in the 1950's who appreciated the logic of such an interpretation of history. Today, we need not be startled by the fact that the Soviets are returning to the old plan devised by the erstwhile seminarian Iosif Djugashvili.

Keston College, in Kent, which specializes in religious affairs with particular attention to Soviet Russia and its captive nations, has helped to bring out a new book, *The Bear's Hug* by Gerald Buss. Subtitled "Religious Belief and the Soviet State," it looks at the history of the Church since 1917, giving attention to its martyrs and heroes; it also contains information, new to many Western readers, that is pertinent to our discussion.

The news from Moscow is that the Russian Orthodox Church will be celebrating its millennium in 1988, and there is now little doubt that we may look forward to a new union of church and state in Russia. Consistent with the continued drift to the "right," such a "new attitude to religion" will be of incalculable strategic value to the regime, particularly in areas like Central America and even, with certain adjustments, in the Moslem World. To be sure, this is not the point of Mr. Buss's book. Yet the persecution of the Church in Soviet Russia and its exploitation for political purposes are complementary, not contradictory realities; reading *The Bear's Hug* with the strategic concerns of Soviet rulers in mind, we may draw our own conclusions.

At 9 p.m. on September 3, 1943, Stalin summoned the three Orthodox Metropolitans to the Kremlin. The historic meeting, it is usually said, revealed the Marshal's intention to make the Church a part of the war effort. Yet the meeting took place some six months after the surrender of the Germans at Stalingrad, in every way the turning point of the war, and after the success of the Kursk-Orel counteroffensive; the Allies had just landed in Italy, and the armistice, while still not announced publicly, had been signed (with Stalin's approval, in his country's name) on September 3, the day of the meeting. As far as the "war effort" was concerned, Stalin needed the Church less than ever before. Yet from 1943 to 1953, according to Mr. Buss, "the number of functioning churches grew to a maximum of about one half of the prerevolutionary total of about 50,000," from an estimated 1939 total of "under 1,000, and possibly much lower." On the occasion of Stalin's 70th birthday on December 21, 1949, the churches resounded with a *Te Deum*, as he was hailed homiletically for his *deyania* (apostolic deeds) as "a paternally solicitous guardian of all aspects of our human existence."

In the last decade of Stalin's rule, the new Soviet Church was becoming firmly established as a handmaiden of the totalitarian state charged with the important task of disseminating propaganda and projecting influence. Predictably, the "de-Stalinization" policies of Stalin's successors were accompanied by anti-Church activity (by 1965, according to Mr. Buss, "fewer than 8,000 churches" remained open). It appears inevitable that the current Soviet regime will use next year's celebration of the millennium to correct the strategic blunder of its predecessors, restoring the Church to its proper place in Soviet policy, ideology, and propaganda. It should be no more difficult for master propagandists to combine the "new attitude to religion" with the "modern vision of Russia" than, in another context, it was to combine the music of Richard Wagner with the production of tanks. The only question is whether the West will greet this new attitude as yet another of all the glad tidings from Gorbachev's Russia.

Andrei Navrozov is poetry editor of Chronicles.

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SCREEN

The Long War

by Katherine Dalton

***Platoon*; directed and written by Oliver Stone; Hemdale Film Corporation & Orion Pictures.**

Some opinions are communicated like a virus, and the received wisdom on *Platoon* is a good example of this cultural dissemination on the scale of an epidemic. It's a movie that moviegoers have flocked to, and as for our collected punditry, bowing and scraping before *Platoon*'s fashionable view of Vietnam, they have indulged in a collective rave.

Combine popular success and political correctness with this year's trendy subject matter, and you have the cultural icon for the '86-87 season. You need look no further than the Tweedledum and Tweedledee of weekly news journalism to see that this is so. *Time*, on the crest of the accolades, found in their mid-December review that "*Platoon* is different. It matters." *Newsweek* was a little slower on the draw but managed to arrive at a remarkably similar conclusion three weeks later. *Platoon*, it said, was "violent" but "deeply moving"—"After nine years of waiting, Stone has made one of the rare Hollywood movies that matter." *Time* went on to give the movie a cover story in late January: "Vietnam the Way It Really Was" went the headline.

But just what is it that matters so about a cheap (just $6 million) picture that nobody in Hollywood wanted to make (the financing finally came from Britain), with no big stars, and a script that rolls out every moldy cliché from the past 40 years worth of war movies? What is it?

Vietnam, 1967. That platoon of *Platoon* is "somewhere near the Cambodian border"—cliché number one. The new boys arrive, and soon Chris Taylor (our hero and Stone's mouthpiece/alter ego as played by Charlie Sheen) and his new patrol are about to set out on a night march into the jungle. "Wanna see a picture of my girl?" asks the lumpy grunt Gardner, pulling out a photo of the plain but worthy Lucy Jean. Doomed by that hackneyed setup, poor old Gardner doesn't make it through the next scene, blown away in the fighting.

And so on and so forth with old hat masquerading as Nam Like It Really Was—every cliché in the book from a man who was actually there, for yes, just like Chris Taylor, Stone dropped out of college and volunteered. The script, Stone claims, is full of men he knew and revised versions of events that happened. Like Taylor, he wasn't in Vietnam a day before realizing he'd made a big mistake. He heard the boasts of a soldier who claimed to have brained an old woman and knew the originals for both his good Sgt. Elias and his scarred and merciless Sgt. Barnes.

But all that touted real experience, once it is run through the mill of Stone's mind, still turned into a tiresomely typical Vietnam story: a green kid shipped in from the States finds himself in hell, among dopers and conscienceless good ol' boys from the rural South, tries to confront an enemy he never sees (the VC) and turns instead on that "worse" enemy, the enemy within, becoming the killer he must to survive, taking the law into his own hands as he must to wreak justice. It's all pure corn—Elias' head looming in a wide angle shot in the drug den (in this movie the good guys smoke dope), Barnes drinking his inevitable Jack Daniels, and worst of all, Taylor's sermonizing voice-overs.

Even *Time* faulted *Platoon* for being "overwritten," the perfect euphemism for any work that is both trite and verbose. I couldn't scribble fast enough to get down all the baloney. "Sometimes I just look at a guy," says Barnes, "and I know this guy is not gonna make it." Heard that somewhere? Or how about Bunny setting fire to a hut with his Bic and then lighting his cigarette—seen that one? But the best sanctimony got saved for the end. "We did not fight the enemy," says Chris, being flown out of Vietnam after a hellish last night of battle with the Vietnamese. "We fought ourselves, and the enemy is us."

He says that because the main conflict in *Platoon* as Stone has written it is not between the Americans and the VC but between those two sergeants. Barnes, shot seven times (mostly in the face, it seems) and not dead yet, maniacal, cruel; and Elias, in for his third tour and just as effective as Barnes against the VC, but kind to his men, mystical, and mysterious. Elias is a pot smoker to Barnes's J.D.; he is a man who has lost faith, rather than, like Barnes, incapable of it. Barnes is there to kill; Elias is still fighting the good fight and no longer sure why.

When Barnes gratuitously kills an old woman, Elias presses charges, and after they are sent back out together on an ambush, Barnes shoots Elias and leaves him for dead. Taylor had idolized Elias and intuits that Barnes murdered his friend, and after confronting Barnes nearly gets killed by him himself. But it's the night of the final melee, and as the American camp is overrun by the Vietnamese, the commanding officer finally calls in an air strike on his own position. That blast fortuitously knocks Barnes out and aside just as Taylor is about to get his

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skull crushed.

Cut to the next morning, twittering birds and Taylor, bloody but alive, raising himself out of the muck. He finds a gun and then Barnes, alive as well and demanding a medic. Surrounded by bodies of Americans and VC, Taylor shoots him, killing this machine that could not die, beating Barnes at his own game.

I am the child, Taylor muses in the chopper flying out, "of those two fathers," and they "fight for the possession of my soul." To revenge Elias, you see, he had to fight Barnes on Barnes's own terms, tainting himself with Barnes's own evil.

Taylor then goes on about the "obligation to build again," our need to find "goodness and meaning in this life," and the movie ends with a close-up of Sheen's profile in bright white light, an epiphany. Stone concludes by running his dedication to the men who died serving in Vietnam, in one great last presumptuous act.

Platoon is presumptuous, and it is powerful as well. Put a bunch of kids in the Philippine jungle, get a good makeup man, and blow them up realistically on film, dredge up all our harbored fear and awe of war and play on our feelings about Vietnam, and you can move an audience.

What I cannot stress enough is that there is no skill to it. It doesn't take a genius to upset an audience. Violence does not need even a particularly good manipulator behind the lens—it is of its own self a powerful thing, and any hack in California can build a script around it. Violence is, in fact, Stone's trademark as a scriptwriter—he also gave us that cinematic meatgrinder *Scarface*. But just because Stone has chosen a period most Americans feel strongly about, and worked us over with his tortured, dead, and dying, that does not make the movie anything other than an exploitation—of his moviegoer's emotions, and especially of the Vets he presumes to portray.

Success inevitably brings a certain measure of complacency. Praise begets self-praise, and enough good reviews and a man begins to think he knows what he's talking about. "I never was a religious person," Stone told *Time*, "—I was raised a Protestant, the great compromise—but I became religious in Vietnam. Possibly I was saved for a mission. To do some work. Write about it. Make a movie about it." How hard it must be, when millions of people trot off to see your movie, not to believe that Heaven hadn't spared you just for this.

Katherine Dalton writes from New York.

STAGE

A Female Aesthetic

by David Kaufman

***Interviews With Contemporary Women Playwrights* by Kathleen Betsko and Rachel Koenig, New York: Wm. Morrow and Co.; $25.00.**

While Kathleen Betsko and Rachel Koenig are desperate to find, if not manufacture, a "female aesthetic," it fails to emerge from their *Interviews With Contemporary Women Playwrights*; in fact, most of the 30 represented playwrights deny either its existence or its relevance. Liliane Atlan (French) claims, "I don't look for the masculine or the feminine elements; both exist in the world, and it is when we are not completely free that we are either too masculine or too feminine," while in response to the question "Do you feel that there is a female aesthetic in drama?" Susan Yankowitz (British) begins, "I wouldn't say so."

Somewhere in between A and Y, Maria Irene Fornes' reaction may be the most indicative: "How could there possibly not be? Not only is there a women's aesthetic, each woman has her own aesthetic and so does each man. It's like saying 'Is there a Hispanic aesthetic?'" Rosalyn Drexler proclaims, "People make art. Gender is only part of the artists' experiential stockpile." Then there is Janet Neipris' reply: "You mean does it come in the color pink? No. I know women playwrights who write in red, then one who writes in desert colors, another in black, maybe I write in blue. . . . There's a human aesthetic that both connects and separates all playwrights." More ironically still, Ntozake Shange, who suggests that there *is* a "female aesthetic," refuses to identify it: "Because I've written [about] it already and I don't want to mess with it."

Perhaps Corinne Jacker's summary is the best. When asked "Should women try to formalize their feelings about how womanhood affects their work?" Jacker explains, "Not if it is going to be a complaint, an accusation that critics and producers don't take us seriously enough . . . of all the women's organizations that have seminars and panels about how to get women's plays produced, I haven't yet found a conference that tried to grapple with whether or not women have identifiably different senses of time, event, objectivity, character, action, and so on."

While these are among the concerns we might have hoped would be raised, it is only *despite* Betsko and Koenig that they are. The interviewers have invested too much in their narrow-minded mission to recognize that they are not receiving much support from their subjects. It's their own bad faith which is most evident; at times it leads to some shameful exchanges which should have been too embarrassing to include in the final transcripts. When they remind Adrienne Kennedy that "You once described your divorce as 'a choice for writing,'" Kennedy replies, " . . . I don't know whether I ever said that," before elaborating: "Looking back, I think that people put those words in my mouth, because the divorce was not that clear-cut. One paradox I've never quite recovered from is that I feel my former husband encouraged me to write more than anybody has since then. And he supported me financially, and wanted to, and enjoyed doing it."

As clear as Kennedy's words may be to us, they apparently eluded her interviewers. Betsko and Koenig are obviously guilty of putting words into these writers' mouths, as well as ideas in their heads. Their account is filled with deceit and distortion—they misrepresent these playwrights not only to us, but to each other, as when they tell Karen Malpede, "Some feel that the commercial theater is not ready for the truth of women's lives, that they must gain their credibility before exploring

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these truths." The two seem to feel this way far more than the playwrights themselves. If only they had listened, they could have learned something from Michelene Wandor when she said, "Theater goes for novelty anyway, and when women are seen merely as the novelty of the moment, then we know we're not progressing." Even more absurd is *their* insistance on the idea that not enough women have explored the mother-daughter relationship (while, according to them, men have the father-son). This particular fixation of *theirs*, and not of the playwrights, leads to a humiliating moment when they ask Marsha Norman, "Any thought of exploring your own mother-daughter situation?" Quite rightly, the author of *'Night, Mother* becomes indignant in her reply: "You don't think I've done that? . . . it's the funniest question I've ever heard. Do you think I got this mother out of the thin air? Do you think I made this mother up?"

Another theme suggests that women playwrights' most "cherished" works were "often" rejected by literary managers who "felt compelled to protect their audience from material they are not 'ready' for." In their purely *sexist* rush to condemn these "male" decision-makers, Betsko and Koenig don't even examine the quality of the works in question. They also should have had the minimum intelligence to recognize this excuse as standard, rejection-letter jargon which crosses gender-lines. Beyond all that, Mary Gallagher is the only playwright who speaks of this—and even then not as a feminist—but still the "discrimination" is represented as "often described." Where? By whom?

For the most part, the voices of the interviewed playwrights are fiercely independent. Although perceived by their interviewers as representatives of a "movement," they come across as individuals whose motives transcend the appetite to define and catalog. While there are anecdotes of sexist discrimination, it may be reassuring to discover how many resist the label of *woman* playwright. "It depends how it's being used. Generally, I don't like it. Do people call Sam Shepard or Richard Foreman a 'man playwright'?" responds Laura Farabough. Donna de Matteo succinctly concurs: "I don't know if I would go around calling myself a woman writer, the same way a male wouldn't call himself a male writer."

What is lacking in this important collection—the first of its kind—is an *accurate* overview of what *has been* collated. Koenig offers a preamble or "Introduction" and Betsko a diatribe or "Afterword," but neither delivers what we are entitled to: a valid synthesis of the opinions, visions, and experiences that have been assembled. Indeed, where Koenig and Betsko are respectively *solo voce*, they do nothing but reveal the rhetoric of their prejudice—a bias that riles more of the playwrights than it mollifies. But instead of adjusting their personal vendettas according to the confessions and insights obtained, it's as if Betsko and Koenig will not listen to what they have permitted us to hear.

If a conglomerate aesthetic never asserts itself, certain other tendencies *do* surface from these discussions. Tina Howe, Donna de Matteo, and Marsha Norman refer to music and rhythm as an influence on their writing process. Some relate horror stories about their collaboration with directors—Yankowitz even describes being "barred from most rehearsals" of her play, *A Knife in the Water*. But contrary to what Betsko and Koenig seem to suppose or care to acknowledge, Sam Shepard, Albert Innaurato, and even Shaw and Chekhov have all told similar tales out of school. While time and again the interviewed playwrights insist on being viewed as writers instead of members of a gender, the interviewers seem hell-bent to deny the predominantly male tradition of theatrical writing.

Remarkably, Chekhov—a *male*—is mentioned the most often by these playwrights with respect and admiration. Yet if we extended Koenig's rationale that "man" playwrights cannot write female parts, whereas "women [as] the confidantes of sons, brothers, lovers and male friends" can write male characters, we're left to construe that *The Three Sisters* really should have been *The Three Brothers*, and *A Streetcar Named Desire* is a sublimation of *A Subway Called Aggression*. When Koenig in her Introduction suggests that "a male-created female character can and should ideally reflect her male creator's empathetic and imaginative leap toward female sentience, it seems she is much more frequently a substantiation of his idealization or his fear of women," she is completely discounting the contribution of the actresses—an *entire* profession—in realizing these characters.

David Kaufman writes from New York City.

MUSIC

Romanticism, Ever New

by Kyle Rothweiler

Modern music criticism has engaged in a Herculean endeavor to misunderstand Romanticism, both as a historic and as a modern phenomenon. The 19th-century Romantics are relegated to the status of antiques. Their musical language is declared suitable for the musical museums of formal concerts but not worth taking seriously by modern composers. Above all, the modern critic attempts to reduce Romanticism to a mere conglomeration of techniques, some effective and some excessive, but all nothing more than techniques, and those obsolete.

The main complaint the critics make against Romantic music is its subjectivity; it is too personal, too obsessively focused on the emotions of the composer. Subjectivity is equated with solipsism and, ipso facto, irrationality. Leaving aside the emotional qualities of most music, what is to prevent a composer from treating his subjective states "objectively"? The very fact that Romantic music conveys so vividly an enormous range of emotional states should indicate that the artists capable of expressing such affective variety cannot be helpless victims of their own feelings. A man chained by the subjective states of, say, *Tristan und Isolde* would be incapable of writing them down; as Richard Strauss said, only a man made of ice could have composed that opera.

One clue to the Romantics' objectivity is provided by their famous pred-

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ilection for extramusical associations, for program symphonies and tone poems, for operas and other vocal works, for theoretical discussions of the moral and philosophical implications of their work—all attempts to give concrete, palpable form to their nebulous inner states. Complete subjectivists would not have bothered; they probably would not have composed at all.

The effort on the part of modern critics to dismiss Romanticism is not purely malicious nihilism; it is also intended to clear the way for the "music of the future," "atonal" serialism. Twelve-tone music and the other Rube Goldbergian systems of modernism are, incredibly, still believed to be scientific and rational approaches to the problems of tonal art. In fact, such music is often more hysterical than that of the most extreme Romantics, although the range of emotions is practically confined to a gamut between confusion and panic (with occasional hints of lethargy and blind rage).

The modern critic lives in constant terror of having posterity heap abuse on him as it has on the contemporary foes of Beethoven, Wagner, and other musical innovators. He dreads the verdict of the yet unborn, who will pronounce him a boor for opposing the latest auditory gimcrackery. The critic praises everything, and the more incomprehensible it is the more loudly he praises it, hoping to shine as a prophet in future editions of *Grove's*. The only new music he ignores or disparages is that which living people might actually want to listen to—especially modern Romanticism, which he considers reactionary (read Andrew Porter in *The New Yorker* if you think this is hyperbole).

The simplest and most effective way to dismiss 20th-century Romanticism, or any new music that does not conform to the serialist dogma, is to pretend it doesn't exist. In this light it is easy to understand the *Harvard Dictionary of Music* declaration that "new music is, briefly stated, anti-Romanticism" or William H. Youngren's offhand remark in *The Atlantic* of December 1983 that "the rejection of tonality by virtually all of this century's serious composers has brought with it unforeseen difficulties."

It is only a critic hewing to the anti-Romantic, proserial line who could have come up with a catchphrase as silly and superfluous as "the New Romanticism," which one hears applied to the work of certain recent American composers. The expression has some value as a means of distinguishing their music from what is churned out by serialist academia, but the "New" is superfluous because Romanticism, particularly in this country, has never grown old.

American Romanticism is, paradoxically, an entirely modern phenomenon. During the great age of Romanticism in Germany, France, Italy, and Russia, American music lay dormant or toddled around uncertainly, unable to inspire any powerful individual voices. It was only around the turn of the century that Charles Ives produced his splendid Second and Third Symphonies (written before his descent into eccentricity) and became the first American composer to combine a uniquely personal style and a powerful moral urgency with musical nationalism—three vital Romantic principles.

Ives's music was, of course, practically unknown during his lifetime, but he was hardly singular. Twentieth-century American composers like John Alden Carpenter, Charles Griffes, Walter Piston, Howard Hanson, Roy Harris, Aaron Copland, Samuel Barber, David Diamond—all of them are, in one way or another, Romantic in their fundamental approach to composition.

Of course, few if any of these composers would have admitted to being Romantics. The very word has become debased and cheapened, suggesting syrupy strings, bombastic brasses, and pretty piano-playing. No hardheaded modern composer would think of allowing the insult of being branded "Romantic" to go unchallenged.

But the critical obfuscations on this subject have filled it with turmoil. There is no longer even any clear consensus on who was or wasn't a Romantic. Beethoven, to the 19th century the Father of Romanticism, is now often cleared of this charge by musicians and critics, who insist that he was really classical. But if Beethoven was no Romantic, then what about Schubert, Mendelssohn, and Brahms, whose music is just as much, if not more, classical? What about Wagner, whose harmonic innovations actually mark him as the first modern composer? What about the hyper-Romantic Berlioz, who didn't like the term and avoided it?

It is always possible to redistribute labels and rearrange periods, but Romanticism is neither a musical style nor a set of slogans, but a musical philosophy, a way of artistic life. It involves a conception of music that takes full cognizance of its philosophical, ethical, psychological, and political implications. It is music specifically created to transcend the classical concept of music as mere sounds, even if greatly enjoyable and pleasurable ones. As J.W.N. Sullivan says in his book *Beethoven: His Spiritual Development*, the composer "was altogether too much convinced of the overwhelming importance of good and evil to take up an 'art for art's sake' attitude," and the same applies, to one degree or another, to every important Romantic composer, each of whom took Beethoven as his chief point of reference. In truth, with his conception of music as a moral enterprise, Beethoven invented Romanticism in

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music, and it is as futile to try to divorce him from it as it is to try to divorce Einstein from the Theory of Relativity.

The moral intentions of Beethoven's compositions are often specific and concrete. The *Eroica* symphony gives unqualified support to the morality of heroism; *Fidelio* affirms the morality of political freedom; the Ninth Symphony, the morality of joy; in the *Missa Solemnis*, the morality of belief in God. Obviously, Beethoven's morality is no traditional morality—it is the morality of liberation, not the morality of suppression. It is this conception of morality which the subsequent Romantics embraced and on which they rang their changes.

The Romantic period was notable for its unprecedented range and variety of styles. How much did Chopin sound like Bruckner, or Brahms like Berlioz, or Schubert like Liszt? Not much. Similarly, modern American composers cannot escape the epithet of "Romantics" on the grounds of stylistic heterogeneity; on the contrary, Romantic music is identifiable by the number of idioms it is capable of supporting. Copland and Harris don't sound like Schumann or Dvořak because, like all good Romantics, they sound like themselves.

Modern critics to the contrary, Romanticism goes much deeper than surface mannerisms; it is a matter of essential spirit. Listen to Copland's Third Symphony, observe its expansive melodies, its epic proportions, its cumulative energy, its power and heroism, its highly nationalistic character, which brings with it so many concrete extramusical associations, so intense a realization of the moral and political greatness of the American experiment—how to describe this, if not as "Romantic"? Or Harris' Third, with, again, its nationalism and nobility, and also its astonishingly original architecture, its sense of being hewn in a single piece from the composer's brain?

Harris' music is still a vast mystery. Copland described his colleague as "the American Mussorgsky," and the comparison is apt; both men seemed to come from nowhere esthetically, were ignorant of or indifferent to rigid formal procedures, and produced, seemingly by sheer effort of will, almost crudely powerful and original music. As Glenn Gould said of the Russian, "He is like a person who ceases to talk the moment he has nothing further to say"; likewise Harris, whose works gestate out of their basic materials: There is no structural padding. Each Harris work strikes out into new, uncharted territory, sometimes uncertainly but always full of confidence. His works all have their own maps, and if one is guided by the conventional maps of musical geography, one may miss the unusual beauty of many of his landscapes.

A composer engaged in such risky undertakings is due for more than his share of failures, and to many, much of his music is less than completely successful. To such listeners, Harris is often awkward and unsophisticated; he is certainly the reverse of slick and facile. But to those who can see beneath the often clumsy surface, Harris' music, even at its worst, retains a raw emotional appeal. His music lacks subtlety—an overrated artistic virtue—but Harris' rich polyphony, vigorous rhythms, simple melodiousness, and dramatic sense of form have a deeply moving directness which makes the overrefined preciousness of less committed composers seem trivial.

Harris' most important works, his 13 symphonies, are seldom performed. Harris sank into near obscurity after World War II, and his work has been quite shamefully neglected for the past 30 years. Not coincidentally, Harris' reputation plummeted just as "atonality" was coming into fashion. Atonality was supposed to be the only sensible replacement for the theoretically worn-out clichés of traditional harmony. But the modern American Romantics have either ignored atonality completely or have used it only infrequently, as a change of pace or to stretch their technical facility. Serialism became, in effect, a new form of classicism in the second half of this century (replacing, to a large extent, "neoclassicism"); it became a new set of formulae for uninspired academic hacks to plug into.

Composers of serial music like to posture as fiery-eyed individualists launching their art into the glorious future, but the ridiculous truth is that they are typically specimens of bureaucratic Modern Man, clinging desperately to the foundering hulk of our cultural institutions and unable to create anything. Safely ensconced in universities and music schools, they are only capable of imitating the cheesy compositional gimmicks of Schoenberg and Webern. In any art, in any period of history, there is always a vast underbelly of mediocrities who, like it or not, constitute the overwhelming majority—and it is here, and only here that serialism has triumphed. In a way, the 12-tone method provides a useful public service. It is an efficient means of eliminating mediocrities and consigning them to oblivion.

It is true that we have to endure the bubble reputations (in the critic's mouth) of people like Eliot Carter. Carter is full of the usual expressionistic tricks and spasmodic rhythms, aimless "harmony," impenetrable "counterpoint," and creepy modernist "melodies" that were stale 50 years ago.

There may be those who would claim that Carter's music reveals his soul—which, if true, is a more biting and conclusive condemnation of him and his music than the claim that it doesn't. But of course Carter would hotly deny that his compositions reveal anything about anything. Modern academic atonalists subscribe to the theory of music as "just sound," i.e., the theory that tonal art is an exercise in acoustics with no significance beyond the noises produced. Modern musical esthetics, in effect, rejects Beethoven and the entire Romantic concept of art as a philosophical, moral, and psychological enterprise. The moral aspects of tonality being denied, tonality itself is considered expendable.

It should hardly be necessary to point out that moral import in music can only be communicated in the context of a tonal system—a system that utilizes structural harmony and in which chromatic extravagances are made with reference to a firm diatonic base. There can be no atonal moral music, no atonal Romanticism. "Atonal music" is an oxymoron, anyway—all music is made up of tones. But the chaotically chromatic, harmonically unstructured music that is loosely called atonal is in fact amoral—it abandons the realm of ethical choice in art that was so crucial to Beethoven and leaps blindly into academic for-

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mulae. It is significant that in Alban Berg's *Wozzeck*, one of the more successful atonal works, when the composer, towards the end, wishes to draw a musical moral from the operatic proceedings, he drops the serial style completely and writes in powerful, tragic D minor.

In a way, the achievement of the modern American Romantics is even more impressive than that of their European predecessors. During the 19th century, ethics was only in a state of turmoil—in the present century, it is practically extinct. For a composer to stick by the idea of music as a moral force is in these times an act of heroism. Roy Harris was much ridiculed for the high-flown descriptions he attached to some of his works. Of his Seventh Symphony of 1955 he said: "In this work I have hoped to communicate the spirit of affirmation as a declaration of faith in Mankind." It may sound silly, but in an amoral age, the attachment of such ideas to a musical work may indicate nothing more than a composer's attempts to keep his artistic bearings—to keep in focus his responsibility to prevent the disintegration of the "art of arts" into mere formulaic note-spinning.

It is to their credit that the major American composers have upheld that responsibility despite the enormous pressure of critics and theorists to abandon it; the best makers of modern music have had the brains to ignore modern musical esthetics. This has been the case from Ives to the present, which is why I consider the phrase "New Romanticism" as superfluous. The music of George Rochberg, David Del Tredici, and John Adams is in the mainstream of our best modern composers, owing as much to Barber and Hanson as to the "Old Romantics." The thread of modern American Romanticism has never really been broken. The very term "New Romanticism" is in fact only a gimmick, an arthritic gesture on the part of critics to attempt to convince listeners that some new-old stuff has temporarily supplanted the more historically important music of the serial school.

Actually, Romanticism's coming out of the closet is one of the healthiest signs in American culture in years. In the end, the public will have the music it wants, and what it wants is Romanticism. The devotees of serious music, strangely enough, have never abandoned their need of Romantic music as a moral guide in the modern world, which is why Beethoven, Brahms, Wagner, and Verdi retain their central places in the standard repertoire.

I make no claims that the "New Romantics" are fully conscious of the moral meaning of music. The collapse of ethics and esthetics has probably advanced too far for any immediate recognition of the vital philosophical potency of music. The impulse towards Romanticism seems to be largely a subconscious one at present.

Del Tredeci, while intentionally grounding his music in the Romantic century (specifically in Victorian En-

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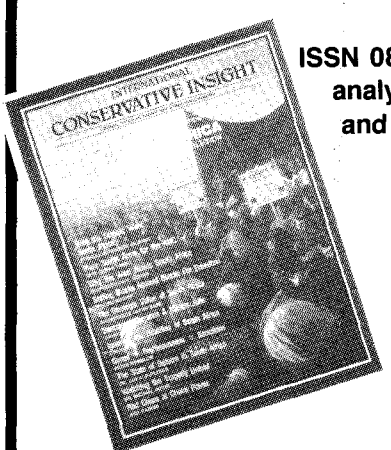

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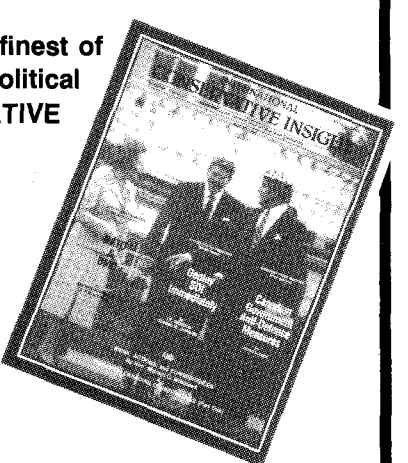

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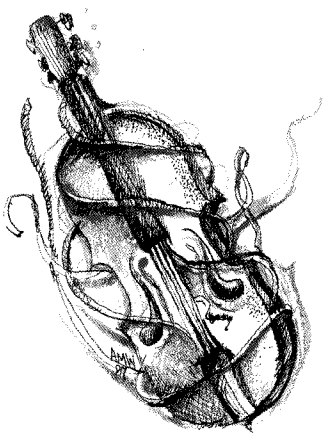
gland), has been preoccupied with the oddly modern—in their irrationality and amorality—Lewis Carroll *Alice* stories. Yet Del Tredici seems to be wanting to grow away from the surrealistic *Alice* material. *In Memory of a Summer Day*, composed in 1980, has little to do with Carroll's weird alternate universes and more with his touching love for the real Alice. The central episode, Triumphant Alice, is supposed to be an unwritten "Wonderland" story, but is in fact a grand heroic march worthy of Raff or Richard Strauss. Del Tredici is on the right track, but he is still groping: His obsession with *Alice* is a little ridiculous in a man approaching 50.

On the other hand, John Adams, not yet 40, seems much more sure of his ethical position. Adams can say with perfect forthrightness and conviction (on the album cover of the recording of his 1985 orchestral work *Harmonielehre*): "I find composing to be a journey through the underworld. And the reason I often have heroic endings in my pieces . . . is that I'm totally amazed to have emerged from the tunnel out into the light. The act of composing is the *creation* of the light for me—it really is like a biblical trial." This is a strange thing for a modern composer to say. And what is even stranger is that this impassioned description of the creation of his music is matched by the remarkable score itself; *Harmonielehre* is a direct and unabashedly moving musical achievement. To those who understand the relation of Romantic music to human



life, the "New Romanticism" is neither new nor unexpected. Its existence simply proves that our species is not quite ready to call it quits.

Kyle Rothweiler is a free-lance writer and composer currently working on a symphony, The Vigilantes of Montana.

POP CULTURE

Rock Around the Bank

by Gary S. Vasilash

Now that ain't workin'
that's the way you do it
You play the guitar on the
MTV
That ain't workin'
that's the way you do it
Money for nothin' and your
chicks for free

(©1985 Chariscourt Ltd./Adm. Almo Music)

Dire Straits' "Money for Nothing" ironically sums up the popular attitude toward the music business. After all, performing on stage for an hour or two a night does not seem all that tough. And we all know that little "work" goes on in recording studios. Yet groups like Mötley Crüe have financial portfolios that the rest of us can only read about in *Money* magazine case studies.

Readers of *Tarnished Gold: The Record Industry Revisited* by R. Serge Denisoff, assisted by William Schurk (Transaction Books; New Brunswick, NJ), will have a different opinion of making it in the music industry, at least in the pop/rock segment, which represents more than 50 percent of the market. First, "Talent is commonly defined as a natural or acquired ability or as a natural endowment of ability of superior quality. This common and popular definition does not totally apply in the music industry. Talent is the *commodity* that has economic potential." In many cases, that potential may not be realized by the recording artist. (And simply being recorded is no mean feat: the groups Boston, Heart, and The Police, all of which have tremendous banking power, started out with vanity records.)

A record can sell 100,000 units, the record company can make $88,000, and when all expenses are accounted for, the recording artist can *owe* the company $31,200. You can bet that more than one group wishes it had spent less time in the studio or made a less-elaborate video, since these costs ultimately come out of this group's coffers.

The record companies should not be thought of as money-grubbing leeches that suck the already anemic bodies of rock musicians. The fact is this: "Records, artists, and even record companies rise and fall strictly according to the bottom-line, profit-loss principle." The record companies must provide a large—and expensive—upport structure for recordings, which ranges from getting music on black vinyl, compact disc and tape, to developing publicity, bringing the product to market, and a myriad of other activities. And don't overlook the need to discover or develop bankable talent that can replace or support old talent. Imagine what it would have been like to be working at Capitol Records when The Beatles announced the end.

Then there are the radio stations, which continue to play the leading role. Commercial radio stations are interested in selling commercial time. Sponsors are only interested in buying market. The playlist that the radio program director develops determines who will be listening. And if pop/rock radio stations around the country all sound the same, it is because the program directors know what formulas sell. Similarly, record stores are only interested in stocking products that will move out the door quickly. And that is determined by what's being played on the radio, which is determined by what the companies are offering. It's a closed loop. What about the recording artist? He must work hard—and be lucky.

The music industry is just that: an industry. The groups can be thought of as small businesses. And the failure rate of small businesses in general is probably far less than the failure of rock enterprises. As *Tarnished Gold* convincingly details and explains, there's no free lunch—and no money for nothing.

Gary Vasilash is senior editor of Production *magazine.*

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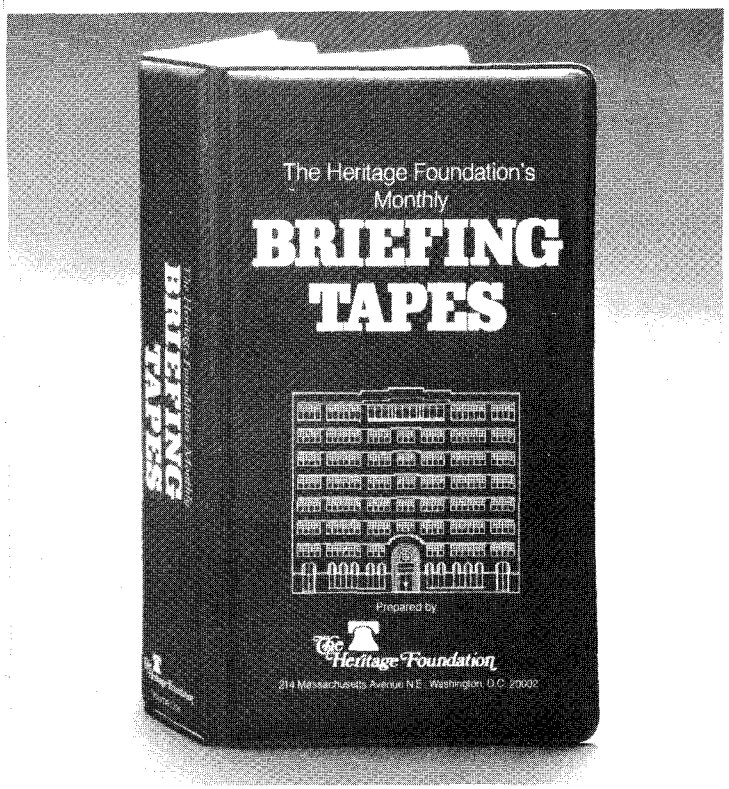

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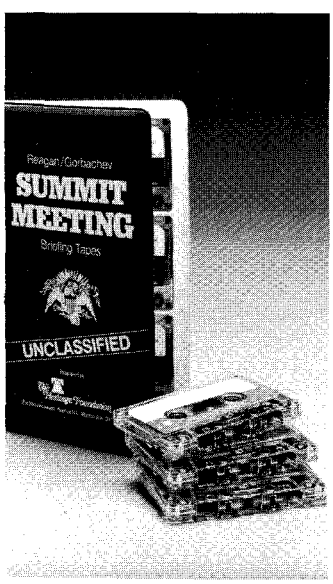

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Is the intact nuclear family now just a memory from days gone by . . . a vestigial social form that was, at best, oversentimentalized and, at worst, a narrow prison, forcing men, women, and children into stereotypical roles that stultified freedom and individuality?

Is it time to move on to a broader range of alternative life-style choices: increasing numbers of families headed by single females . . . unmarried couples living together . . . married couples choosing not to have children . . . marriages between people of the same gender . . . lesbian couples conceiving and raising children through artificial insemination with the help of special feminist-run sperm banks?

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